# THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

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THE

# Vision of Sir Launfal

AND

# Other Poems by Lowell

EDITED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

CHARLES M. STEBBINS, A.M.

Boys' High School, Brooklyn

BROOKLYN

THE ENGLISH LEAFLET COMPANY

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF LOWELL.

On the outskirts of the quiet, rustic village of Cambridge of nearly a century ago, in the midst of pleasant fields stood Elmwood, the birthplace of James Russell Lowell. The house itself, even in those days, had interesting associations. It had been built and first inhabited by Peter Oliver, English stamp agent at Boston, just previous to the breaking out of the Revolution. A request that he resign his office was made upon him by the "Boston Committee," which consisted of about four thousand members. The request of the citizens of Boston carried so much weight that it was not long before the house on "Tory Row" was vacated. Its owner deemed it consistent with his best interests to return to England. The place was afterward inhabited by Elbridge Gerry, notorious for the methods of political districting which he devised, and which have since been known by the term *gerrymandering*.

The Elmwood of 1819 was not the Elmwood of today. The general characteristics, however, were much the same. Many of the trees grew up with the poet and became closely associated with his life. During Lowell's life the house stood in the centre of an inclosure of several acres, surrounded by elms—some of them native, but for the most part English, planted by

the poet's father—oaks, firs, and horse-chestnuts, in addition to fruit trees of various kinds. The place was a haunt for all kinds of birds. The robins plundered the cherry trees; the orioles hung their nests from the elm boughs; and the wrens, yellow-birds, and thrushes built and sang among the syringa and lilac blossoms. In spite of their constant depredations in the fruit trees, they were welcomed by Lowell, and were "lords of the earldom as much as he." In "My Garden Acquaintance," Lowell wrote of them: "The return of the robin is commonly announced by the newspapers, like that of eminent or notorious people to a watering-place, as the first authentic notification of spring. But in spite of his name of migratory thrush, he stays with us all winter. . . . He feels and freely exercises his right of eminent domain. His is the earliest mess of green peas; his all the mulberries I had fancied mine. But if he gets the lion's share of the raspberries, he is a great planter, and sows those wild ones in the woods that solace the pedestrian and give a momentary calm to the jaded victims of the White Hills. He keeps a strict eye over one's fruit, and knows to a shade of purple when your grapes have cooked long enough in the sun.

"During the severe drought a few years ago, the robins wholly vanished from my garden. I neither saw nor heard one for three weeks. Meanwhile a small foreign grape, rather shy of bearing, seemed to find the dusty air congenial, and, dreaming perhaps of its sweet Argos across the sea, decked itself with a score or so of fair bunches. I watched them from day to

day till they should have secreted sugar enough from the sunbeams, and at last made up my mind that I would celebrate my vintage the next morning.

"But the robins, too, had somehow kept note of them. They must have sent out spies, as did the Jews into the promised land, before I was stirring. When I went with my basket at least a dozen of these winged vintagers bustled out from among the leaves, and, alighting on the nearest trees, interchanged some shrill remarks about me of a derogatory nature. They had fairly sacked the vines. Not Wellington's veterans made cleaner work of a Spanish town; not Federals or Confederates were ever more impartial in the confiscation of neutral chickens. . . . As for the birds, I do not believe there is one of them but does more good than harm; and of how many featherless bipeds can this be said?"

Lowell, like Longfellow and Holmes and Emerson, was the son of a clergyman. His father, Dr. Charles Lowell, was a man noted for his good sense, ideals of honor, strictness to duty, and for his high but practical views of life. For several generations the Lowells had been prominent and influential citizens of Massachusetts. They were descended from Percival Lowell, or Lowle, who had settled at Newbury in the year 1639. The city of Lowell took its name from Francis Cabot Lowell, who had the foresight to perceive that the future prosperity of New England lay in manufacturing. A section of the Bill of Rights of Massachusetts, by which slavery was abolished from the commonwealth, was draughted by John Lowell, a judge of con-

siderable reputation in his generation. Lowell Institute was established by a bequest of $250,000 by John Lowell, Jr. Another John Lowell was for many years a district judge of the United States.

The characteristic qualities of his maternal ancestors were of an entirely different nature. Harriet Spence, his mother, was of a Scottish family, and tradition has it that she was descended from Patrick Spens of old ballad fame. She was endowed with a wonderful memory, the gift of easily acquiring languages, and an ardent appreciation of poetry, especially the romantic songs and ballads which became the early intellectual nourishment of her children. James, the youngest of five, was born on the anniversary of Washington's birth, in the year 1819, the year in which were born George Eliot, John Ruskin, Arthur Hugh Clough, Charles Kingsley, and Queen Victoria.

This diversity of attainments and tastes of the parents peculiarly fitted them to nurture their children into symmetrical, well-balanced men and women. There were the practical conceptions of life, the intellectual temper and attainments of the father; there were the love for the ideal, the appreciation of the beautiful and romantic in the training of the mother; and there were the lofty and noble sentiments of both. The manner of living was such as the people of a century ago inherited from the firm and homely customs of the Puritans.

The education of James began in his father's library, which contained about a thousand well-selected volumes. Here, no doubt, he yielded to the influences

which his mother's training had stimulated in him, and filled his young head brimful of fanciful visions. In later life he wrote in a letter to a friend: "Here I am in my garret. I slept here when I was a little curly-headed boy, and used to see visions between me and the ceiling, and dream the so often recurring dream of having the earth put into my hand like an orange. In it I used to be shut up without a lamp—my mother saying that none of her children should be afraid of the dark—to hide my head under the pillow, and then not to be able to shut out the shapeless monsters that thronged around me."

The first school that he attended was one nearly opposite Elmwood, kept by William Wells, an Englishman of the old school, with a thorough classical education, with whom, it is said, the use of the cane had not become a lost art. Lowell afterward attended a thorough classical school in Boston.

He entered Harvard in 1835, when he was in his sixteenth year, and graduated three years later in the same class with several men who became famous in various spheres of life. Among them were William W. Story (the noted sculptor and poet), Prof. Nathan Hale, Prof. H. L. Eustis, and Charles Devens, a general in the Civil War, afterwards Judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, and Attorney-General of the United States in the administration of President Hayes.

Lowell's rank as a student was far below what his abilities gave promise of. He was known to remark often afterward that he read everything except the prescribed courses. He had an especial aversion to

mathematics. What he loved most were books of travel, romances, poems, and plays, particularly those of the old writers; and these he read to the neglect of his regular studies. Such food as this, however, was far better suited to the producing of a poet than the books prescribed by the faculty.

Despite the fact that he did not shine as a student, Lowell knew how to make friends, friends whom he kept. In the dedication of the Class Poem, which he wrote at the time of his graduation, this fact was manifest in his reference to the members of the class, "some of whom he loves, none of whom he hates."

Upon leaving college, Lowell entered the Law School, where he took the degree of LL.B. in 1840. He soon afterward opened an office in Boston, but although he wrote a story for the *Boston Miscellany* entitled "My First Client," it does not appear that he ever had one, or, indeed, that he ever seriously entertained the idea of following the profession.

The poet's first published book, a small volume of verse entitled "A Year's Life," appeared just at the close of his twenty-second year. The motto prefixed to this volume was the line, "*Ich habe gelebt und geliebet*," from the lyric sung by Theckla, in Schiller's "Wallenstein." The lady of the poet's fancy in these verses was Miss Maria White, "a person of delicate and spiritual beauty, refined in taste, sympathetic in nature, and the author of several exquisite poems."

Most of the poems of this first volume were rejected by the maturer judgment of the author in preparing subsequent editions of his works, as they were then

rejected by his contemporaries; yet they contained evidences of a sparkling poetic genius. Among the best pieces of the collection are "The Beggar," "Irene," and "With a Pressed Flower."

The young author's next literary venture was the *Pioneer,* a magazine which he undertook conjointly with Robert Carter, the two subscribing themselves as "Editors and Publishers." The new periodical was beautifully printed and illustrated according to the custom of the times; the articles were of superior excellence, but, like many another dream of young authors, it was doomed to die. Only three numbers appeared, and the editors were forced to suspend business on account of lack of patronage. It was of too high an order to succeed in those days. Some of the contributors to those three numbers, besides the editors, were Mrs. Browning (then Miss Barrett), Edgar Allan Poe, Whittier, William W. Story (artist and poet), Jones Very (Lowell's classmate and lifelong friend), and T. W. Parsons.

In 1844, three years after the publication of "A Year's Life," he issued a second volume of poems. Many of the pieces in this little book are favorites to-day, although they failed to please the staid taste of the public of that period. The style of the author and much of the subject matter were entirely new, qualities quite certain to fail of the approval of the stern New Englander of sixty-five years ago, with his fixed notions and inherent dislike for innovations. Of this volume Dr. Underwood says, "There was something of Wordsworth's simplicity, something of Tennyson's

sweetness and musical flow, and something more of the manly earnestness of the Elizabethan poets; but the resemblances were external; the individuality of the poet is clear. The obvious characteristic of the poems is their high religious spirit. It is not a wild and passive morality that we perceive, but the aggressive force of primitive Christianity. The vivid conception of the law of love and of the duties of brotherhood suggests the time when such thoughts were new and startling, before their vital power had been lost in chanted creeds and iterated forms."

In the same year Lowell and Maria White were married, and went to live with his parents at Elmwood. And it was in the following year that his first prose work appeared, "Conversations with Some of the Old Poets."

The thoughts and feelings of the young man, now in his twenty-seventh year, were becoming settled and crystallized. The mighty problems of the times—and no time has seen questions of greater importance to the human race, or greater changes working—shared, nay, almost consumed his time and attention. His sympathies were with Sumner, Garrison, and Phillips; and more than any other poet, unless it be Whittier, he gave himself, heart and soul, to the cause of the slave. In his "Stanzas on Freedom" he wrote:

"Men! whose boast it is that ye
Come of fathers brave and free,
If there breathe on earth a slave,
Are ye truly free and brave?

If ye do not feel the chain
When it works a brother's pain,
Are ye not base slaves indeed,
Slaves unworthy to be freed?

"Is true freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake,
And, with leathern hearts, forget
That we owe mankind a debt?
No! true freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And, with heart and hand, to be
Earnest to make others free!"

Already, too, he had written the prophetic lines,

"He who would be the tongue of this wide land
Must string his harp with chords of sturdy iron,"

little suspecting, perhaps, that he would be the one called upon so to string his harp before another year had passed by. But when the Mexican war broke out, undertaken, as many thought, for the extension of slave territory, Lowell's heart flamed with indignation. What could he do? He wrote a letter to the *Boston Courier*, enclosing the first of what are now known as the "Biglow Papers." The letter, containing the poem of Hosea Biglow, purported to come from his father, Ezekiel. The theme was the recruiting of volunteers in Boston. The poem, in the Yankee dialect, ran:

"Thrash away, you'll hev to rattle
On them kittle-drums o' yourn—
'Tain't a knowin' kind o' cattle
That is ketched with mouldy corn."

Boston, and, indeed, the whole reading public, was amazed. The literary circle pronounced the poem vulgar; some good gentlemen regarded it as blasphemous, some were simply amused, while others, of the earnest abolition stamp, rejoiced at the début of a new champion of the cause, though some of them, like Charles Sumner, wished he could have used better English. Shortly afterward came "What Mr. Robinson Thinks," which tickled the people still more than the previous ones had done. Then followed "A Debate in the Sennit, Sot to a Nusry Rhyme." Poem followed poem till the war was over and the struggle had temporarily closed.

Of the "Biglow Papers" the *Cornhill Magazine* said: "A man can hardly hope to repeat such a success as that of the 'Biglow Papers.' They are vigorous jests of song evolved by an excitement powerful enough to fuse together many heterogeneous elements. Strong sense, grotesque humor, hatred of humbug, patriotic fervor, and scorn of tyranny predominate alternately. It is only when an electric flash of emotion is passing through a nation that such singular products of spiritual chemistry are produced."

Scarcely were the "Biglow Papers" finished and gathered together in book form when Lowell again turned his pen to satire, and produced "The Fable for

Critics," a poem in which he inscribed, in the midst of his satire and humor—humor as bright and sparkling as his Beaver Brook—an estimate of contemporary writers of both prose and poetry. Of himself he speaks with the same ease and discernment that he displays in regard to the others, and his self-criticism is done unsparingly:

"There is Lowell, who is striving Parnassus to climb
With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme.
He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,
But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders;
The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching
Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching."

It was a distinction, however, which he never did learn, and doubtless never meant to learn.

He had produced in the meantime "The Vision of Sir Launfal," which has come to be regarded by many not only as Lowell's best sustained flight of lyrical poetry, but the best sustained piece of lyrical verse yet produced in America.

During these years of Lowell's married life his domestic associations had been happy in the extreme. Mrs. Lowell was a beautiful and gifted woman, who was a source of inspiration to the poet. But her failing health had become a source of much concern to him. Children had been born to them, but all except one of them had died in infancy, and the parental feelings mingled with a deep reverence were pathetically ex-

pressed in the three poems, "She Came and Went," "The Changeling," and "The First Snowfall."

In 1851 the poet and his wife sailed for Europe, where they spent most of their time in Italy, though they visited England, France, and Switzerland. When they returned to America in the fall of the following year, Mrs. Lowell's health was still failing, and she died in the autumn of 1853. It was in earlier years that Lowell had written the sweet poem containing the prayer:

"God, do not let my loved one die,
  But rather wait until the time
That I am grown in purity
  Enough to enter Thy pure clime;
Then take me, I will gladly go,
  So that my love remain below."

Afterward, in speaking of home, he expressed the wish that he might close the shutters,

"For it died that autumn morning
  When she, its soul, was borne
To lie all dark on the hillside
  That looks over woodland and corn."

During these years of anxiety and bereavement, Lowell had been busily engaged in literary work, and he still continued to be so. Much of his best work had appeared in *Putnam's Monthly*. And now he was called upon to deliver a course of lectures on the Eng-

lish poets at Lowell Institute. These discourses, twelve in number, were highly successful both with the literary people and with the younger generation in Boston. The success of the undertaking was due entirely to the genuine worth of the lecturer's work—the clear-cut thought, the deep poetic insight, and the strength and vividness of his language.

This demonstration of his ability came opportunely. Longfellow, who was professor of belles-lettres at Harvard, desired to retire that he might devote his undivided attention to literature. Lowell was chosen as his successor, and was given two years' leave of absence to pursue his studies in Europe. After an absence of two and a half years he returned and took up his labors as a professor. Popularity came to him readily. His thoroughness in scholarship, his quick and keen insight, and his genuine sincerity won for him immediate admirers among professors and students.

Two events of importance in the life of Lowell occurred during his first year at Harvard. He was married to Miss Frances Dunlop, and became editor-in-chief of the *Atlantic Monthly,* which had just been founded by prominent New England authors. One of the avowed purposes of the periodical was to support the cause of abolition. To the numbers of this magazine Lowell contributed numerous articles both in prose and verse, which are among the best of his works. He held this place of honor and influence till 1862.

A new opportunity was coming to "string his harp with chords of sturdy iron," and as the struggle of the Civil War came on, again he took up the "Biglow

Papers," and made his fame as a satirist secure, if, indeed, it still needed anything to make it so. These "Papers," discussing all the leading phases of the question before the people, the poet continued from the outbreak of the war to the days of reconstruction. In summing up the merits of the "Biglow Papers," Dr. Underwood says: "In this new field he is wholly without a rival—the sole laureate of the native, unlettered speech, and the exemplar of the mother-wit of New England. The few characters in his dramas are complementary, or, perhaps, as he himself suggests, 'humorously identical under a seeming incongruity.'"

In 1864 appeared a volume of prose, entitled "Fireside Travels," containing "Cambridge Thirty Years Ago," sketches of life in the woods of Maine, and notes of his travels in Italy. The pieces, most of them, had been written long before, when Lowell was only thirty-four years old; but they are among the most successful of his prose productions. The book is overflowing with joyfulness, thoughtfulness, and the fresh feelings of a young and happy poet. It instructs while it charms, and gives food for contemplation while it fills with pleasure. It is a book characterized by beauty and versatility.

Five years later the collection of poems called "Under the Willows" appeared. The volume contained a large portion of the work done by the poet during the years that followed his appointment to the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*. In the following year, 1870, he published "The Cathedral," a poem suggested by the great cathedral at Chartres; "My Study

Windows," and "Among My Books." In "My Study Windows" were some of the best known essays, notably those on Lincoln, Emerson, Carlyle, and Chaucer. "Among My Books" contained the essays on Dryden, Shakespeare, Lessing, and Rousseau. And a second volume published the year following contained the excellent essay on Dante and those on Milton, Wordsworth, and Keats. These critical estimates of the poets are among the best that any literature has produced. In speaking of them, the *Nation,* a periodical which may be accredited with seldom overestimating the merit of authors, said that "Among My Books" contained the "most deliberate words of perhaps the best of living English critics—his final judgments on many of the great names of literature; judgments which are the result of long and wide study and reading, of marvelous acuteness of sight and delicacy of sympathy, containing a poet's opinion of other poets, a wit's opinion of other wits; in short, the careful opinions of a man of cultivated genius concerning other men of genius who are near and dear to us all, but to all of us partly unintelligible without an interpreter; this book is one of the best gifts that for many years has come to the world of English literature; and to say this is to say one of the best gifts that has for many years come to the world of literature."

The next poetical publication of importance that came from the pen of Lowell was the "Three Memorial Poems." The greatest of the three, the "Commemoration Ode," which contains the finely drawn portrait of Lincoln, was dedicated "To the ever sweet and shining

memory of the ninety-three sons of Harvard College who have died for their country in the war of nationality!" Among them were numbered Col. Charles Russell Lowell, Lieut. James Jackson Lowell, and Capt. William Lowell Putnam, together with five other near relatives of the poet. And they were the feelings of his heart that he recorded when he said:

"I strive to mix some gladness with my strain,
But the sad strings complain,
And will not please the ear:
I sweep them for a pæan, but they wane
Again and yet again
Into a dirge, and die away, in pain."

In the early seventies Lowell, with his wife, visited Europe, and while there received the appointment as Minister to Spain by President Hayes. The ministry to Austria had previously been offered to him, but he had declined. The romantic associations of Spain, however, were more inviting to the tastes of a poet, and Lowell gladly accepted this time. His duties here were fulfilled with such diplomacy and rare good sense that he was transferred, on the retirement of Mr. Welsh, to London, in 1880. He received a most enthusiastic welcome to the metropolis of the English people, and his manly worth and rare scholarship won for him friends and applause everywhere. To him were accorded honors which were given to no other American. He was called upon to give the addresses at the unveiling of the bust of Fielding, in Taunton, Somersetshire;

at the unveiling of the bust of Coleridge, in Westminster Abbey, which address the *London Press* pronounced to be the "finest eulogium on Coleridge yet written"; at the unveiling of a bust of Gray, at Pembroke College; and on several other notable occasions. Always he was accorded sympathetic welcome and hearty approval by all who heard him.

He left England to return home in 1885 amidst the universal regret of the English people. The *Spectator* voiced the general feeling. "Mr. Lowell is going back to America," it said; "and though to him this means going home, to us it seems as though an honored countryman were leaving us. American ministers not a few have lived among us for a time, as though they were part and parcel of ourselves. But Mr. Lowell has done this in a sense and in a degree that has been reached by none of his predecessors. He is at once the most and the least English, and the most and the least American of all who write our common tongue, and it is this that fits him so pre-eminently to be the link that he has been between the two countries."

Besides the social and public honors that were showered upon him, and the degrees that the great universities conferred upon him out of recognition of his scholarship, he was offered a professorship at the University of Oxford. But Lowell was eager to see America once more.

His return was greeted by the ablest authors of this country with articles in prose and verse. The number of the *Literary World* published June 27th was devoted to his welcoming. From this time forth he was

called upon in America, as he had been in England, to deliver addresses on notable occasions. Perhaps the most important of these was the address he delivered on the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Harvard College.

Lowell's health had been steadily declining since his return from England. His labors were greatly curtailed, and they ceased altogether some time before his death. During these last years he spent much of his time with his daughter. The end came at Elmwood, on August 12, 1891. He was buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery two days later. Among the pall-bearers were President Eliot, of Harvard; Oliver Wendell Holmes, George William Curtis, Charles Eliot Norton, and William Dean Howells.

Lowell was a man of medium height, inclining to be slender, but strong and active, full of energy. In his movements he was deliberate and sustained. The color of his hair was chestnut, before it became gray, his beard being of a slightly lighter tint. The most expressive part of his features probably was his eyes, which were gray. They partook of his mood always, becoming grave or bright, penetrating or sparkling with mirth, according to the temper of his mind.

In point of wit the man was unsurpassed, either in writing or speaking. His supply was inexhaustible. It was in his power to give utterance to sustained flights of poetic imagery or to pour out a stream of mirth overflowing with frolicsome humor.

In habits, like many another poet, Lowell was far from regular. Everything—exercise, reading, writing,

and even eating—came from impulse more than system. But he always had an impulse, and one for something good; hence the measure of his attainment.

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## LITERARY ESTIMATES OF LOWELL.

"With such a genius for comedy,—greater, I believe, than any English poet ever had,—with such wit, drollery, Yankee sense and spirit, I wonder he does not see his 'best hold,' and stick to it."

THACKERAY.

"If we look at certain grave, sweet pages of Thackeray, Newman, Martineau, Matthew Arnold, and the Ruskin of thirty years ago, we feel that we have in them specimens of ideal English. Something of the calm dignity, the seemingly artless perfection, and the limpid movement, characteristic of those writers, may sometimes be seen in passages of Lowell; but his felicity in figures, and the irrepressible rush of his double stream of thought, often lead him into a style of writing that is both poetry and prose, and is not purely either. . . .

"If the soul of poetry is energy, its garment beauty, its effect emotion; if, according to Landor, 'philosophy should run through poetry as veins do through the body'; if that is a poem which is inspired with original thought, graced by unborrowed pictures and figures, and which suggests continually more than meets the eye,—then it will be impossible to deny Lowell a high rank among poets. . . .

"Poems with such a range, such vivid conceptions, such high purpose, such keen insight, such tender sympathy, and such flashing lights of imagery, have never been very common."

FRANCIS H. UNDERWOOD, LL.D.

"The style of Mr. Lowell is emphatically his own, and yet no man reports so habitually—half sympathetically, half whimsically—the ring of other writers. Homer Wilbur is especially redolent or resonant of the old Elizabethan masters.

"We hear the grave Verulam Lord Bacon, or the judicious Hooker. . . . Sometimes we get an odd flavor of Swift, right humor being substituted for malignant satire; at others, the flowing and tender style of Jeremy Taylor comes back to us as we read. . . .

"Yet is he as voluminous and many-sided in poetry as in prose; 'he sings to one clear harp in divers tones.'"

H. R. HAWEIS.

"As often as the first eight lines of this poem (*The Vision of Sir Launfal*) come to mind, I feel a poetic breath not borne to me again from our home hills and fields, and rarely wafted from the old lands beyond the sea; and passing on to the thirty-third line beginning,

'And what is so rare as a day in June?'

I say each time, 'Here and in certain passages of the later odes are the purest, the sweetest, and at the same time the freshest strains from any singer of our soil.'"

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

## THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL.

THE legends of the Holy Grail are so numerous and so varied that it is impossible to give an account that will not in many points be in conflict with other versions. But any one of the renderings given by the various poets or chroniclers will convey an idea of the importance of the story in mediæval life and literature.

It is said by some authorities that the legend of the Holy Grail was introduced into Europe by the Moors in Spain, and that the Spaniards transmitted it to the French, where it was moulded into two lengthy poems by Chrestien de Troyes and Robert de Borron. It soon found its way into England through the hand of Archdeacon Walter Map, of Oxford, who interwove it with the legends of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. It early became very popular in Germany, where it attracted the genius of Wolfram von Eschenbach and Gottfried von Strassburg. Upon the "Parzival" of von Eschenbach, Wagner based his famous opera.

The story runs that, when Lucifer was cast out of heaven, one precious stone of great size and beauty fell from his crown to earth. From this jewel was carved a cup of marvelous beauty, which was held in high reverence for many centuries, when it descended to Joseph of Arimathea.

At the Crucifixion, Joseph held the cup beneath the bleeding side of the Saviour and caught a few drops of the Redeemer's blood. Thereafter it was believed to be endowed with the power of healing anyone soever who looked upon it.

Annually a snow-white dove brought a fresh host down from heaven, placing it upon the cup, which was held by a band of angels or immaculate virgins. The vessel, however, remained in the possession of Joseph of Arimathea, who, on account of persecution by the Jews, left Palestine, carrying the sacred vessel with him. He landed at Marseilles, and, after many adventures, arrived at Glastonbury, where the Sangreal remained for a long time in the possession of his descendants. But one of the conditions of its remaining was that its guardian lead a spotlessly pure life, and in course of time it came into the hands of one who failed to keep himself unsullied; accordingly the cup disappeared. Men became so degenerate that for many years the cup was beheld by no one, and it became a favorite quest of the knights to seek the marvelous vessel.

One day there entered the hall of knights in Arthur's palace a "good old man" bringing with him a young knight, whom he proclaimed to be of the king's lineage and a descendant of Joseph of Arimathea. This young knight was Sir Galahad. The hermit led him to the Siege Perilous, meaning the dangerous seat, because whoever sat there unworthily was punished by heaven with death. When the veil that covered the Siege

Perilous was lifted the knights beheld the words, "This is the seat of Sir Galahad, the good knight."

Already Sir Gawain had taken oath to seek for the Sangreal for twelve months and a day, and all the knights had followed his example. So Arthur said: "Now, at this quest of the Sangreal shall all ye of the Round Table depart, and never shall I see you again all together; therefore I will that ye all repair to the meadow of Camelot, for to joust and tourney yet once more before ye depart." But his desire was to test Sir Galahad. That day Sir Galahad overthrew all the other knights except Sir Launcelot and Sir Perceval. After that they went to the minster to service, and then all departed, singly or by twos, in fulfillment of their vows.

The months passed by and they met many and manifold adventures, delivering maidens from men and beasts, fighting for the sake of glory, encountering witches, magicians, and demons; but they succeeded not in their quest of the Holy Grail.

It happened that as Sir Launcelot was riding aimlessly in a wild forest he chanced upon a cross that designated the way, beyond which he saw a chapel. He "tied his horse till a tree" and went to the broken door, but could not enter; no one was within, though he saw through the chinks in the door "a fair altar full richly arrayed with cloth of clean silk, and there stood a fair, clean candlestick which bare six great candles, and the candlestick was of silver." He returned to his horse, and, lying down upon his shield, fell asleep.

In a vision he saw two white palfreys approach bearing a wounded knight in a litter. And Sir Launcelot heard the wounded man cry, "O sweet Lord, when shall this sorrow leave me, and when shall the holy vessel come by me whereby I shall be healed?" And as he spoke, the candlestick and the tapers moved before the cross, and after them came a salver of silver with the Holy Grail. Then the sick man was healed and went away praising God and marveling at Launcelot, who was so sluggish as to sleep when the sacred relic was passing by.

Then Launcelot awaked, grieving, for he knew that it was because of his sin he had not been allowed to behold the Holy Grail except in a dream. He arose and went to a hermitage and confessed all his sins, and, having taken new vows of faithfulness, he set out again on his quest.

Finally one evening he came before a great castle by the sea, and he heard a voice say, "Launcelot, enter into the castle, where thou shalt see a great part of thy desire." So he went in, and all the doors were open before him, until he came to the last chamber, the door of which was shut, and he was unable to open it. He kneeled down before the door and prayed; then it was opened, and in the midst of the chamber he saw a table of silver and upon it a sacred vessel. Launcelot, forgetting a prohibition to enter, advanced into the chamber. A breath that seemed of fire threw him into a swoon from which he did not recover until after twenty-four days. Then he knew that the quest of the

Sangreal was achieved as far as it ever would be by him, and he returned to the country of Arthur.

Two other knights there were, besides Sir Galahad and Sir Launcelot, to whom it was vouchsafed to behold the Holy Grail—Sir Perceval and Sir Bohort. After months spent in the quest, it happened that Sir Galahad found Perceval hard set by some twenty knights; putting spurs to his horse, he rushed into the midst and put to flight those who escaped the weight of his sword. In his pursuit of the fugitives, Sir Perceval was left behind, and at night Sir Galahad stopped at a hermitage in the forest. Ere long a maiden knocked at the door and desired to speak with the knight. "Sir Galahad," she said, "I will that ye arm and mount your horse and follow me, for I will show you the highest adventure that ever knight saw."

So Galahad went out and followed her till they came to the sea, where they saw a ship waiting. Then Galahad and the damsel, who was Sir Perceval's sister, left their horses and entered the ship, where they found Sir Bohort, or Bors, and Sir Perceval.

All that day and the next the wind and sea drove the ship swiftly along, until they came between two rocks, and they found it impossible to proceed. They beheld another ship, however, and the damsel bade them enter it; so Galahad went over to it, and after him came the maiden, and then Sir Perceval and Bohort. On board they found the table of silver and the Holy Grail, which was covered with red samite. After doing reverence to the Sangreal, they sailed away in the new ship, which carried them to the city of Serras.

In this city of the Paynims they were imprisoned for a year, at the end of which time the tyrant of the city died and Sir Galahad was chosen king. After he had worn the crown for a year and a day, the three young knights went to the chapel one morning, according to their custom, and as they entered the place where the Grail was to be, lo! they beheld one in the likeness of Christ, who bade Sir Galahad stand forth and look upon the Sangreal as he uncovered it. Then, according to the promise that had been given him, Sir Galahad desired to depart this life, as he had accomplished his mission, and his prayer was granted.

After this, Sir Perceval retired to a hermitage to lead a holy life, but Sir Bohort retained his secular garb, for he desired to return to his friends of the Round Table. After a year and two months more, Perceval died, and Sir Bohort set out for the palace of Arthur. When he came to the Table Round, he found the other knights returned, and he told them all that had befallen him and his companions. Thus ended the quest of the Holy Grail.

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## THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL.

### Prelude to Part First.

I.

Over his keys the musing organist,
  Beginning doubtfully and far away,
First lets his fingers wander as they list,
  And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay;

Then, as the touch of his loved instrument
Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,
First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent
Along the wavering vista of his dream.

II.

Not only around our infancy
Doth heaven with all its splendors lie;
Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb and know it not.

III.

Over our manhood bend the skies;
Against our fallen and traitor lives
The great winds utter prophecies;
With our faint hearts the mountain strives;
Its arms outstretched, the druid wood
Waits with its benedicite;
And to our age's drowsy blood
Still shouts the inspiring sea.

IV.

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in;
At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:

'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
No price is set on the lavish summer;
June may be had by the poorest comer.

V.

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

VI.

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

VII.

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving;
'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,—

'Tis the natural way of living:
Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
The soul partakes the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
What wonder if Sir Launfal now
Remembered the keeping of his vow?

## Part First.

### I.

"My golden spurs now bring to me,
And bring to me my richest mail,
For to-morrow I go over land and sea
In search of the Holy Grail;
Shall never a bed for me be spread,
Nor shall a pillow be under my head,
Till I begin my vow to keep;
Here on the rushes will I sleep,
And perchance there may come a vision true
Ere day create the world anew."
Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,
Slumber fell like a cloud on him,
And into his soul the vision flew.

II.

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,
In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their knees,
  The little birds sang as if it were
  The one day of summer in all the year,
And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees:
The castle alone in the landscape lay
Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray;
'Twas the proudest hall in the North Countree,
And never its gates might opened be,
Save to lord or lady of high degree;
Summer besieged it on every side,
But the churlish stone her assaults defied;
She could not scale the chilly wall,
Though around it for leagues her pavilions tall
Stretched left and right,
Over the hills and out of sight;
  Green and broad was every tent,
  And out of each a murmur went
Till the breeze fell off at night.

III.

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,
And through the dark arch a charger sprang,
Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight,
In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright
It seemed the dark castle had gathered all
Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall
  In his siege of three hundred summers long,
And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,

Had cast them forth: so, young and strong,
And lightsome as a locust-leaf,
Sir Launfal flashed forth in his maiden mail,
To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

IV.

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,
And morning in the young knight's heart;
Only the castle moodily
Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,
And gloomed by itself apart;
The season brimmed all other things up
Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

V.

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,
He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same,
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
The flesh 'neath his armor 'gan shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still
Like a frozen waterfall;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,—
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

VI.

The leper raised not the gold from the dust:
"Better to me the poor man's crust,

Better the blessing of the poor,
Though I turn me empty from his door;
That is no true alms which the hand can hold;
He gives only the worthless gold
  Who gives from a sense of duty;
But he who gives but a slender mite,
And gives to that which is out of sight,
  That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
Which runs through all and doth all unite,—
The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms.
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

## Prelude to Part Second.

### I.

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,
  From the snow five thousand summers old;
On open wold and hill-top bleak
  It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare;
The little brook heard it and built a roof
'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;
All night by the white stars' frosty gleams
He groined his arches and matched his beams;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars
As the lashes of light that trim the stars:

He sculptured every summer delight
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
But silvery mosses that downward grew;
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops
And hung them thickly with diamond drops,
That crystalled the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one:
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter-palace of ice;
'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depths serene through the summer day,
Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,
  Lest the happy model should be lost,
Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
  By the elfin builders of the frost.

II.

Within the hall are song and laughter,
  The cheeks of Christmas glow red and jolly,
And sprouting is every corbel and rafter
  With lightsome green of ivy and holly;
Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide

Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;
The broad flame-pennons droop and flap
And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;
Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,
Hunted to death in its galleries blind;
And swift little troops of silent sparks,
Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,
Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks
Like herds of startled deer.

III.

But the wind without was eager and sharp,
Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,
And rattles and wrings
The icy strings,
Singing, in dreary monotone,
A Christmas carol of its own,
Whose burden still, as he might guess,
Was—"Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless!"
The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch
As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,
And he sat in the gateway and saw all night
The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,
Through the window-slits of the castle old,
Build out its piers of ruddy light
Against the drift of the cold.

## Part Second.

I.

There was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;
The river was dumb and could not speak,
For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun;
A single crow on the tree-top bleak
From its shining feathers shed off the cold sun;
Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,
As if her veins were sapless and old,
And she rose up decrepitly
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

II.

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,
For another heir in his earldom sate;
An old, bent man, worn out and frail,
He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;
Little he recked of his earldom's loss,
No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross,
But deep in his soul the sign he wore,
The badge of the suffering and the poor.

III.

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare
Was idle mail 'gainst the barbèd air,
For it was just at the Christmas time;
So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,
And sought for a shelter from cold and snow

In the light and warmth of long-ago;
He sees the snake-like caravan crawl
O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,
Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,
He can count the camels in the sun,
As over the red-hot sands they pass
To where, in its slender necklace of grass,
The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade,
And with its own self like an infant played,
And waved its signal of palms.

IV.

"For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms!"—
The happy camels may reach the spring,
But Sir Launfal sees only the grewsome thing,
The leper, lank as the rain-blanched bone,
That cowers beside him, a thing as lone
And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas,
In the desolate horror of his disease.

V.

And Sir Launfal said—"I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,—
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,—
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side:
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through him, I give to thee!"

VI.

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise
He had flung an alms to leprosie,
When he girt his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.
The heart within him was ashes and dust;
He parted in twain his single crust,
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink,
'Twas a mouldy crust of coarse brown bread,
'Twas water out of a wooden bowl,—
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed,
And 'twas red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

VII.

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,
Shining and tall and fair and straight
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate,—
Himself the Gate whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in Man.

VIII.

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine,
And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,
That mingle their softness and quiet in one
With the shaggy unrest they float down upon;

And the voice that was softer than silence said,
"Lo, it is I, be not afraid!
In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
Behold, it is here,—this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;
This crust is my body broken for thee,
This water his blood that died on the tree;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need;
Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me."

IX.

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swound:
"The Grail in my castle here is found;
Hang my idle armor up on the wall,
Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;
He must be fenced with stronger mail
Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

X.

The castle gate stands open now,
And the wanderer is welcome to the hall
As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;
No longer scowl the turrets tall,
The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;
When the first poor outcast went in at the door,
She entered with him in disguise,

And mastered the fortress by surprise;
There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;
The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land
Has hall and bower at his command;
And there's no poor man in the North Countree
But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

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## RHŒCUS.

God sends his teachers unto every age,
To every clime, and every race of men,
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth
Into the selfish rule of one sole race:
Therefore each form of worship that hath swayed
The life of man, and given it to grasp
The master-key of knowledge, reverence,
Enfolds some germs of goodness and of right;
Else never had the eager soul, which loathes
The slothful down of pampered ignorance,
Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

There is an instinct in the human heart
Which makes that all the fables it hath coined
To justify the reign of its belief
And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,
Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,
Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful hands,
Points surely to the hidden springs of truth,

For, as in nature naught is made in vain,
But all things have within their hull of use
A wisdom and a meaning which may speak
Of spiritual secrets to the ear
Of spirit; so, in whatsoe'er the heart
Hath fashioned for a solace to itself,
To make its inspirations suit its creed,
And from the niggard hands of falsehood wring
Its needful food of truth, there ever is
A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,
Not less than her own works, pure gleams of light
And earnest parables of inward lore.
Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,
As full of freedom, youth, and beauty still
As the immortal freshness of that grace
Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze.

A youth named Rhœcus, wandering in the wood,
Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,
And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,
He propped its gray trunk with admiring care,
And with a thoughtless footstep loitered on.
But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind
That murmured "Rhœcus!" 'Twas as if the leaves,
Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured it.
And, while he paused bewildered, yet again
It murmured "Rhœcus!" softer than a breeze.
He started, and beheld with dizzy eyes
What seemed the substance of a happy dream
Stand there before him, spreading a warm glow
Within the green glooms of the shadowy oak.

It seemed a woman's shape, yet all too fair
To be a woman, and with eyes too meek
For any that were wont to mate with gods.
All naked like a goddess stood she there,
And like a goddess all too beautiful
To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.
"Rhœcus, I am the Dryad of this tree,"
Thus she began, dropping her low-toned words
Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew,
"And with it I am doomed to live and die;
The rain and sunshine are my caterers,
Nor have I other bliss than simple life;
Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can give,
And with a thankful joy it shall be thine."

Then Rhœcus, with a flutter at the heart,
Yet, by the prompting of such beauty, bold,
Answered: "What is there that can satisfy
The endless craving of the soul but love?
Give me thy love, or but the hope of that
Which must be evermore my spirit's goal."
After a little pause she said again,
But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,
"I give it, Rhœcus, though a perilous gift;
An hour before the sunset meet me here."
And straightway there was nothing he could see
But the green glooms beneath the shadowy oak,
And not a sound came to his straining ears
But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,
And far away upon an emerald slope
The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

Now, in those days of simpleness and faith,
Men did not think that happy things were dreams
Because they overstepped the narrow bourne
Of likelihood, but reverently deemed
Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful
To be the guerdon of a daring heart.
So Rhœcus made no doubt that he was blest,
And all along unto the city's gate
Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he walked
The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its wont,
And he could scarce believe he had not wings,
Such sunshine seemed to glitter through his veins
Instead of blood, so light he felt and strange.

Young Rhœcus had a faithful heart enough,
But one that in the present dwelt too much
And, taking with blithe welcome whatsoe'er
Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in that,
Like the contented peasant of a vale,
Deemed it the world, and never looked beyond.
So, haply meeting in the afternoon
Some comrades who were playing at the dice,
He joined them and forgot all else beside.

The dice were rattling at the merriest,
And Rhœcus, who had met but sorry luck,
Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,
When through the room there hummed a yellow bee
That buzzed about his ear with down-dropped legs
As if to light. And Rhœcus laughed and said,
Feeling how red and flushed he was with loss,

"By Venus! does he take me for a rose?"
And brushed him off with rough, impatient hand.
But still the bee came back, and thrice again
Rhœcus did beat him off with growing wrath.
Then through the window flew the wounded bee,
And Rhœcus, tracking him with angry eyes,
Saw a sharp mountain peak of Thessaly
Against the red disk of the setting sun,—
And instantly the blood sank from his heart,
As if its very walls had caved away.
Without a word he turned, and, rushing forth,
Ran madly through the city and the gate,
And o'er the plain, which now the wood's long shade,
By the low sun thrown forward broad and dim,
Darkened well-nigh unto the city's wall.

Quite spent and out of breath he reached the tree,
And, listening fearfully, he heard once more
The low voice murmur "Rhœcus!" close at hand:
Whereat he looked around him, but could see
Naught but the deepening glooms beneath the oak.
Then sighed the voice, "O Rhœcus! nevermore
Shalt thou behold me or by day or night,
Me, who would fain have blessed thee with a love
More ripe and bounteous than ever yet
Filled up with nectar any mortal heart:
But thou didst scorn my humble messenger,
And send'st him back to me with bruised wings.
We spirits only show to gentle eyes.
We ever ask an undivided love,
And he who scorns the least of nature's works

Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.
Farewell! for thou canst never see me more."

Then Rhœcus beat his breast, and groaned aloud,
And cried, "Be pitiful! forgive me yet
This once, and I shall never need it more!"
"Alas!" the voice returned, "'tis thou are blind,
Not I unmerciful; I can forgive,
But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;
Only the soul hath power o'er itself."
With that again there murmured "Nevermore!"
And Rhœcus after heard no other sound,
Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves,
Like the long surf upon a distant shore,
Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.
The night had gathered round him: o'er the plain
The city sparkled with its thousand lights,
And sounds of revel fell upon his ear
Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,
With all its bright sublimity of stars,
Deepened, and on his forehead smote the breeze:
Beauty was all around him and delight,
But from that eve he was alone on earth.

## A CHIPPEWA LEGEND.

I.

THE old Chief, feeling now well-nigh his end,
Called his two eldest children to his side,
And gave them, in few words, his parting charge!
"My son and daughter, me ye see no more;
The happy hunting-grounds await me, green
With change of spring and summer through the year:
But, for remembrance, after I am gone,
Be kind to little Sheemah for my sake:
Weakling he is and young, and knows not yet
To set the trap, or draw the seasoned bow;
Therefore of both your loves he hath more need,
And he, who needeth love, to love hath right;
It is not like our furs and stores of corn,
Whereto we claim sole title by our toil,
But the Great Spirit plants it in our hearts,
And waters it, and gives it sun, to be
The common stock and heritage of all:
Therefore be kind to Sheemah, that yourselves
May not be left deserted in your need."

II.

Alone, beside a lake, their wigwam stood,
Far from the other dwellings of their tribe,
And, after many moons, the loneliness
Wearied the elder brother, and he said,
"Why should I dwell here far from men, shut out
From the free, natural joys that fit my age?

Lo, I am tall and strong, well skilled to hunt,
Patient of toil and hunger, and not yet
Have seen the danger which I dared not look
Full in the face; what hinders me to be
A mighty Brave and Chief among my kin?"
So, taking up his arrows and his bow,
As if to hunt, he journeyed swiftly on,
Until he gained the wigwams of his tribe,
Where, choosing out a bride, he soon forgot,
In all the fret and bustle of new life,
The little Sheemah and his father's charge.

III.

Now, when the sister found her brother gone,
And that, for many days, he came not back,
She wept for Sheemah more than for herself;
For Love bides longest in a woman's heart,
And flutters many times before he flies,
And then doth perch so nearly, that a word
May lure him back to his accustomed nest;
And Duty lingers even when Love is gone,
Oft looking out in hope of his return;
And, after Duty hath been driven forth,
Then Selfishness creeps in the last of all,
Warming her lean hands at the lonely hearth,
And crouching o'er the embers, to shut out
Whatever paltry warmth and light are left,
With avaricious greed, from all beside.
So, for long months, the sister hunted wide,
And cared for little Sheemah tenderly;
But, daily more and more, the loneliness

Grew wearisome, and to herself she sighed,
"Am I not fair? at least the glassy pool,
That hath no cause to flatter, tells me so;
But, O, how flat and meaningless the tale,
Unless it tremble on a lover's tongue!
Beauty hath no true glass, except it be
In the sweet privacy of loving eyes."
Thus deemed she idly, and forgot the lore
Which she had learned of nature and the woods,
That beauty's chief reward is to itself,
And that Love's mirror holds no image long
Save of the inward fairness, blurred and lost
Unless kept clear and white by Duty's care.
So she went forth and sought the haunts of men,
And, being wedded, in her household cares,
Soon, like the elder brother, quite forgot
The little Sheemah and her father's charge.

IV.

But Sheemah, left alone within the lodge,
Waited and waited, with a shrinking heart,
Thinking each rustle was his sister's step.
Till hope grew less and less, and then went out,
And every sound was changed from hope to fear.
Few sounds there were:—the dropping of a nut,
The squirrel's chirrup, and the jay's harsh scream,
Autumn's sad remnants of blithe Summer's cheer,
Heard at long intervals, seemed but to make
The dreadful void of silence silenter.
Soon what small store his sister left was gone,
And, through the Autumn, he made shift to live

On roots and berries, gathered in much fear
Of wolves, whose ghastly howl he heard ofttimes,
Hollow and hungry, at the dead of night.
But Winter came at last, and when the snow,
Thick-heaped for gleaming leagues o'er hill and plain,
Spread its unbroken silence over all,
Made bold by hunger, he was fain to glean
(More sick at heart than Ruth, and all alone)
After the harvest of the merciless wolf,
Grim Boaz, who, sharp-ribbed and gaunt, yet feared
A thing more wild and starving than himself;
Till, by degrees, the wolf and he grew friends,
And shared together all the winter through.

V.

Late in the Spring, when all the ice was gone,
The elder brother, fishing in the lake,
Upon whose edge his father's wigwam stood,
Heard a low murmuring noise upon the shore:
Half like a child it seemed, half like a wolf,
And straightway there was something in his heart
That said, "It is thy brother Sheemah's voice."
So, paddling swiftly to the bank, he saw,
Within a little thicket close at hand,
A child that seemed fast changing to a wolf,
From the neck downward, gray with shaggy hair,
That still crept on and upward as he looked.
The face was turned away, but well he knew
That it was Sheemah's, even his brother's face.
Then with his trembling hands he hid his eyes,
And bowed his head, so that he might not see

The first look of his brother's eyes, and cried,
"O Sheemah! O my brother, speak to me!
Dost thou not know me, that I am thy brother?
Come to me, little Sheemah, thou shalt dwell
With me henceforth, and know no care or want!"
Sheemah was silent for a space, as if
'Twere hard to summon up a human voice,
And, when he spake, the voice was as a wolf's:
"I know thee not, nor art thou what thou say'st;
I have none other brethren than the wolves,
And, till thy heart be changed from what it is,
Thou art not worthy to be called their kin."
Then groaned the other, with a choking tongue,
"Alas! my heart is changed right bitterly;
'Tis shrunk and parched within me even now!"
And, looking upward fearfully, he saw
Only a wolf that shrank away and ran,
Ugly and fierce, to hide among the woods.

---

## AMBROSE.

### I.

Never, surely, was holier man
Than Ambrose, since the world began;
With diet spare and raiment thin
He shielded himself from the father of sin;
With bed of iron and scourgings oft,
His heart to God's hand as wax made soft.

II.

Through earnest prayer and watchings long
He sought to know 'tween right and wrong,
Much wrestling with the blessed Word
To make it yield the sense of the Lord,
That he might build a storm-proof creed
To fold the flock in at their need.

III.

At last he builded a perfect faith,
Fenced round about with *The Lord thus saith;*
To himself he fitted the doorway's size,
Meted the light to the need of his eyes,
And knew, by a sure and inward sign,
That the work of his fingers was divine.

IV.

Then Ambrose said, "All those shall die
The eternal death who believe not as I."
And some were boiled, some burned in fire,
Some sawn in twain, that his heart's desire,
For the good of men's souls, might be satisfied
By the drawing of all to the righteous side.

V.

One day, as Ambrose was seeking the truth
In his lonely walk, he saw a youth
Resting himself in the shade of a tree;
It had never been granted him to see
So shining a face, and the good man thought
'Twere pity he should not believe as he ought,

VI.

So he set himself by the young man's side,
And the state of his soul with questions tried;
But the heart of the stranger was hardened indeed,
Nor received the stamp of the one true creed;
And the spirit of Ambrose waxed sore to find
Such features the porch of so narrow a mind.

VII.

"As each beholds in cloud and fire
The shape that answers his own desire,
So each," said the youth, "in the Law shall find
The figure and fashion of his mind;
And to each in his mercy God has allowed
His several pillar of fire and cloud."

VIII.

The soul of Ambrose burned with zeal
And holy wrath for the young man's weal:
"Believest thou then, most wretched youth,"
Cried he, " a dividual essence in Truth?
I fear me thy heart is too cramped with sin
To take the Lord in his glory in."

IX.

Now there bubbled beside them where they stood
A fountain of waters sweet and good;
The youth to the streamlet's brink drew near
Saying, "Ambrose, thou maker of creeds, look here!"
Six vases of crystal then he took,
And set them along the edge of the brook.

x.

"As into these vessels the water I pour,
There shall one hold less, another more,
And the water unchanged, in every case,
Shall put on the figure of the vase;
O thou, who wouldst unity make through strife,
Canst thou fit this sign to the Water of Life?"

xi.

When Ambrose looked up, he stood alone,
The youth and the stream and the vases were gone;
But he knew, by a sense of humbled grace,
He had talked with an angel face to face,
And felt his heart change inwardly,
As he fell on his knees beneath the tree.

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## A PARABLE.

Worn and footsore was the Prophet
When he reached the holy hill;
"God has left the earth," he murmured,
"Here his presence lingers still.

"God of all the olden prophets,
Wilt thou talk with me no more?
Have I not as truly loved thee
As thy chosen ones of yore?

"Hear me, guider of my fathers,
Lo, an humble heart is mine;
By thy mercy I beseech thee,
Grant thy servant but a sign!"

Bowing then his head, he listened
For an answer to his prayer;
No loud burst of thunder followed,
Not a murmur stirred the air:

But the tuft of moss before him
Opened while he waited yet,
And from out the rock's hard bosom
Sprang a tender violet.

"God! I thank thee," said the Prophet,
"Hard of heart and blind was I,
Looking to the holy mountain
For the gift of prophecy.

"Still thou speakest with thy children
Freely as in Eld sublime,
Humbleness and love and patience
Give dominion over Time.

"Had I trusted in my nature,
And had faith in lowly things,
Thou thyself wouldst then have sought me,
And set free my spirit's wings,

"But I looked for signs and wonders
That o'er men should give me sway;
Thirsting to be more than mortal,
I was even less than clay.

"Ere I entered on my journey,
As I girt my loins to start,
Ran to me my little daughter,
The belovéd of my heart;

"In her hand she held a flower,
Like to this as like may be,
Which beside my very threshold
She had plucked and brought to me."

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## AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE.

I.

What visionary tints the year puts on,
When falling leaves falter through motionless air
Or numbly cling and shiver to be gone!
How shimmer the low flats and pastures bare,
As with her nectar Hebe Autumn fills
The bowl between me and those distant hills,
And smiles and shakes abroad her misty, tremulous hair!

II.

No more the landscape holds its wealth apart,
Making me poorer in my poverty,

But mingles with my senses and my heart;
My own projected spirit seems to me
In her own reverie the world to steep;
'Tis she that waves to sympathetic sleep,
Moving, as she is moved, each field and hill and tree.

III.

How fuse and mix, with what unfelt degrees,
Clasped by the faint horizon's languid arms,
Each into each, the hazy distances!
The softened season all the landscape charms;
Those hills, my native village that embay,
In waves of dreamier purple roll away,
And floating in mirage seem all the glimmering farms.

IV.

Far distant sounds the hidden chickadee
Close at my side; far distant sound the leaves;
The fields seem fields of dream, where Memory
Wanders like gleaning Ruth; and as the sheaves
Of wheat and barley wavered in the eye
Of Boaz as the maiden's glow went by,
So tremble and seem remote all things the sense receives.

V.

The cock's shrill trump that tells of scattered corn,
Passed breezily on by all his flapping mates,
Faint and more faint, from barn to barn is borne,
Southward, perhaps to far Magellan's Straits;

Dimly I catch the throb of distant flails;
Silently overhead the hen-hawk sails,
With watchful, measuring eye, and for his quarry waits.

VI.

The sobered robin, hunger-silent now,
Seeks cedar-berries blue, his autumn cheer;
The chipmunk, on the shingly shagbark's bough,
Now saws, now lists with downward eye and ear,
Then drops his nut, and, cheeping, with a bound
Whisks to his winding fastness underground;
The clouds like swans drift down the streaming atmosphere.

VII.

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar shadows
Drowse on the crisp, gray moss; the ploughman's call
Creeps faint as smoke from black, fresh-furrowed meadows;
The single crow a single caw lets fall;
And all around me every bush and tree
Says Autumn's here, and Winter soon will be,
Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence over all.

VIII.

The birch, most shy and ladylike of trees
Her poverty, as best she may, retrieves,
And hints at her foregone gentilities
With some saved relics of her wealth of leaves;
The swamp-oak, with his royal purple on,
Glares red as blood across the sinking sun,
As one who proudlier to a falling fortune cleaves.

IX.

He looks a sachem, in red blanket wrapt,
Who, 'mid some council of the sad-garbed white
Erect and stern, in his own memories lapt,
With distant eye broods over other sights,
Sees the hushed wood the city's flare replace,
The wounded turf heal o'er the railway's trace,
And roams the savage Past of his undwindled rights.

X.

The red-oak, softer-grained, yields all for lost,
And, with his crumpled foliage stiff and dry,
After the first betrayal of the frost
Rebuffs the kiss of the relenting sky;
The chestnuts, lavish of their long-hid gold,
To the faint Summer, beggared now and old,
Pour back the sunshine hoarded 'neath her favoring eye.

XI.

The ash her purple drops forgivingly
And sadly, breaking not the general hush;
The maple-swamps glow like a sunset sea,
Each leaf a ripple with its separate flush;
All round the wood's edge creeps the skirting blaze
Of bushes low, as when, on cloudy days,
Ere the rain fall, the cautious farmer burns his brush.

XII.

O'er yon low wall, which guards one unkempt zone,

Where vines and weeds and scrub-oaks intertwine
Safe from the plough, whose rough, discordant stone
Is massed to one soft gray by lichens fine,
The tangled blackberry, crossed and recrossed, weaves
A prickly network of ensanguined leaves;
Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-alders shine.

XIII.

Pillaring with flame this crumbling boundary,
Whose loose blocks topple 'neath the ploughboy's foot,
Who, with each sense shut fast except the eye,
Creeps close and scares the jay he hoped to shoot,
The woodbine up the elm's straight stem aspires,
Coiling it, harmless, with autumnal fires;
In the ivy's paler blaze the martyr oak stands mute.

XIV.

Below, the Charles—a stripe of nether sky,
Now hid by rounded apple-trees between,
Whose gaps the misplaced sail sweeps bellying by,
Now flickering golden through a woodland screen,
Then spreading out, at his next turn beyond,
A silver circle like an inland pond—
Slips seaward silently through marshes purple and green.

XV.

Dear marshes! vain to him the gift of sight
Who cannot in their various incomes share,

From every season drawn, of shade and light,
Who sees in them but levels brown and bare;
Each change of storm or sunshine scatters free
On them its largess of variety,
For Nature with cheap means still works her wonders rare.

XVI.

In Spring they lie one broad expanse of green,
O'er which the light winds run with glimmering feet:
Here, yellower stripes track out the creek unseen,
There, darker growths o'er hidden ditches meet;
And purpler stains show where the blossoms crowd,
As if the silent shadow of a cloud
Hung there becalmed, with the next breath to fleet.

XVII.

All round, upon the river's slippery edge,
Witching to deeper calm the drowsy tide,
Whispers and leans the breeze-entangling sedge;
Through emerald glooms the lingering waters slide,
Or, sometimes wavering, throw back the sun,
And the stiff banks in eddies melt and run
Of dimpling light, and with the current seem to glide.

XVIII.

In Summer 'tis a blithesome sight to see,
As, step by step, with measured swing, they pass,
The wide-ranked mowers wading to the knee,
Their sharp scythes panting through the wiry grass;

Then, stretched beneath a rick's shade in a ring,
Their nooning take, while one begins to sing
A stave that droops and dies 'neath the close sky of brass.

XIX.

Meanwhile that devil-may-care, the bobolink,
Remembering duty, in mid-quaver stops
Just ere he sweeps o'er rapture's tremulous brink,
And 'twixt the windrows most demurely drops,
A decorous bird of business, who provides
For his brown mate and fledglings six besides,
And looks from right to left, a farmer 'mid his crops.

XX.

Another change subdues them in the Fall,
But saddens not; they still show merrier tints,
Though sober russet seems to cover all;
When the first sunshine through their dew-drops glints,
Look how the yellow clearness, streamed across,
Redeems with rarer hues the season's loss,
As Dawn's feet there had touched and left their rosy prints.

XXI.

Or come when sunset gives its freshened zest,
Lean o'er the bridge and let the ruddy thrill,
While the shorn sun swells down the hazy west,
Glow opposite;—the marshes drink their fill
And swoon with purple veins, then slowly fade
Through pink to brown, as eastward moves the shade,

Lengthening with stealthy creep, of Simond's darkening hill.

XXII.

Later, and yet ere Winter wholly shuts,
Ere through the first dry snow the runner grates,
And the loath cart-wheel screams in slippery ruts,
While firmer ice the eager boy awaits,
Trying each buckle and strap beside the fire,
And until bedtime plays with his desire,
Twenty times putting on and off his new-bought skates;—

XXIII.

Then, every morn, the river's banks shine bright,
With smooth plate-armor, treacherous and frail,
By the frost's clinking hammers forged at night,
'Gainst which the lances of the sun prevail,
Giving a pretty emblem of the day
When guiltier arms in light shall melt away,
And states shall move free-limbed, loosed from war's cramping mail.

XXIV.

And now those waterfalls the ebbing river
Twice every day creates on either side
Tinkle, as through their fresh-sparred grots they shiver
In grass-arched channels to the sun denied;
High flaps in sparkling blue the far-heard crow,
The silvered flats gleam frostily below,
Suddenly drops the gull and breaks the glassy tide.

XXV.

But crowned in turn by vying seasons three,
Their winter halo hath a fuller ring;
This glory seems to rest immovably,—
The others were too fleet and vanishing;
When the hid tide is at its highest flow,
O'er marsh and stream one breathless trance of snow
With brooding fulness awes and hushes everything.

XXVI.

The sunshine seems blown off by the bleak wind,
As pale as formal candles lit by day;
Gropes to the sea the river dumb and blind;
The brown ricks, snow-thatched by the storm in play,
Show pearly breakers combing o'er their lee,
White crests as of some just enchanted sea,
Checked in their maddest leap and hanging poised midway.

XXVII.

But when the eastern blow, with rain aslant,
From mid-sea's prairies green and rolling plains
Drives in his wallowing herds of billows gaunt,
And the roused Charles remembers in his veins
Old Ocean's blood and snaps his gyves of frost,
That tyrannous silence on the shores is tost
In dreary wreck, and crumbling desolation reigns,

XXVIII.

Edgewise or flat, in Druid-like device,
With leaden pools between or gullies bare,
The blocks lie strewn, a bleak Stonehenge of ice;
No life, no sound, to break the grim despair,
Save sullen plunge, as through the sedges stiff
Down crackles riverward some thaw-sapped cliff,
Or when the close-wedged fields of ice crunch here and there.

XXIX.

But let me turn from fancy-pictured scenes
To that whose pastoral calm before me lies:
Here nothing harsh or rugged intervenes;
The early evening with her misty dyes
Smooths off the raveled edges of the nigh,
Relieves the distant with her cooler sky,
And tones the landscape down, and soothes the wearied eyes.

XXX.

There gleams my native village, dear to me,
Though higher change's waves each day are seen,
Whelming fields famed in boyhood's history,
Sanding with houses the diminished green;
There, in red brick, which softening time defies,
Stand square and stiff the Muses' factories;—
How with my life knit up is every well-known scene!

XXXI.

Flow on, dear river! not alone you flow
To outward sight, and through your marshes wind;
Fed from the mystic springs of long-ago,

Your twin flows silent through my world of mind:
Grow dim, dear marshes, in the evening's gray!
Before my inner sight ye stretch away,
And will forever, though these fleshly eyes grow blind.

XXXII.

Beyond the hillock's house-bespotted swell,
Where Gothic chapels house the horse and chaise,
Where quiet cits in Grecian temples dwell,
Where Coptic tombs resound with prayer and praise,
Where dust and mud the equal year divide,
There gentle Allston lived, and wrought, and died,
Transfiguring street and shop with his illumined gaze.

XXXIII.

*Virgilium vidi tantum*,—I have seen
But as a boy, who looks alike on all,
That misty hair, that fine Undine-like mien,
Tremulous as down to feeling's faintest call;—
Ah, dear old homestead! count it to thy fame
That hither many times the Painter came;—
One elm yet bears his name, a feathery tree and tall.

XXXIV.

Swiftly the present fades in memory's glow,—
Our only sure possession is the past;
The village blacksmith died a month ago,
And dim to me the forge's roaring blast;
Soon fire-new mediævals we shall see
Oust the black smithy from its chestnut-tree,
And that hewn down, perhaps, the bee-hive green and vast.

XXXV.

How many times, prouder than king on throne,
Loosed from the village school-dame's A's and B's,
Panting have I the creaky bellows blown,
And watched the pent volcano's red increase,
Then paused to see the ponderous sledge, brought down
By that hard arm voluminous and brown,
From the white iron swarm its golden vanishing bees.

XXXVI.

Dear native town! whose choking elms each year
With eddying dust before their time turn gray,
Pining for rain,—to me thy dust is dear;
It glorifies the eve of summer day,
And when the westering sun half sunken burns,
The mote-thick air to deepest orange turns,
The westward horseman rides through clouds of gold away,

XXXVII.

So palpable, I've seen those unshorn few,
The six old willows at the causey's end
(Such trees Paul Potter never dreamed nor drew),
Through this dry mist their checkering shadows send,
Striped here and there, with many a long-drawn thread,
Where streamed through leafy chinks the trembling red,
Past which, in one bright trail, the hangbird's flashes blend.

XXXVIII.

Yes, dearer far thy dust than all that e'er,
Beneath the awarded crown of victory,
Gilded the blown Olympic charioteer;
Though lightly prized the ribboned parchments three,
Yet *collegisse juvat,* I am glad
That here what colleging was mine I had,—
It linked another tie, dear native town, with thee!

XXXIX.

Nearer art thou than simply native earth.
My dust with thine concedes a deeper tie;
A closer claim thy soil may well put forth,
Something of kindred more than sympathy;
For in thy bounds I reverently laid away
That blinding anguish of forsaken clay,
That title I seemed to have in earth and sea and sky,

XL.

That portion of my life more choice to me
(Though brief, yet in itself so round and whole)
Than all the imperfect residue can be;—
The Artist saw his statue of the soul
Was perfect; so, with one regretful stroke
The earthen model into fragments broke,
And without her the impoverished seasons roll.

## BEAVER BROOK.

Hushed with broad sunlight lies the hill,
And minuting the long day's loss,
The cedar's shadow, slow and still,
Creeps o'er its dial of gray moss.

Warm noon brims full the valley's cup,
The aspen's leaves are scarce astir,
Only the little mill sends up
Its busy, never-ceasing burr.

Climbing the loose-piled wall that hems
The road along the mill pond's brink.
From 'neath the arching barberry-stems,
My footstep scares the shy chewink.

Beneath a bony buttonwood
The mill's red door lets forth the din;
The whitened miller, dust-imbued,
Flits past the square of dark within.

No mountain torrent's strength is here;
Sweet Beaver, child of forest still,
Heaps its small pitcher to the ear
And gently waits the miller's will.

Swift slips Undine along the race
Unheard, and then, with flashing bound,
Floods the dull wheel with light and grace,
And laughing, hunts the loath drudge round,

The miller dreams not at what cost
The quavering millstones hum and whirl,
Nor how, for every turn are tost
Armfuls of diamond and of pearl.

But Summer cleared my happier eyes
With drops of some celestial juice,
To see how Beauty underlies
Forevermore each form of Use.

And more: methought I saw that flood,
Which now so dull and darkling steals,
Thick, here and there, with human blood,
To turn the world's laborious wheels.

No more than doth the miller there,
Shut in our several cells, do we
Know with what waste of beauty rare
Moves every day's machinery.

Surely the wiser time shall come
When this fine overplus of might,
No longer sullen, slow and dumb,
Shall leap to music and to light.

In that new childhood of the Earth
Life of itself shall dance and play,
Fresh blood through Time's shrunk veins make mirth,
And labor meet delight half-way.

## TO THE DANDELION.

I.

Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth, thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

II.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;
'Tis the Spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

III.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:
Not in mid-June the golden-cuirassed bee

Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

IV.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

V.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
With news from heaven, which he could bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

VI.

Thou art the type of those meek charities
Which make up half the nobleness of life,

Those cheap delights the wise
Pluck from the dusty wayside of earth's strife:
Words of frank cheer, glances of friendly eyes,
Love's smallest coin, which yet to some may give
The morsel that may keep alive
A starving heart, and teach it to behold
Some glimpse of God where all before was cold.

VII.

Thy wingèd seeds, whereof the winds take care,
Are like the words of poet and of sage
Which through the free heaven fare,
And, now unheeded, in another age
Take root, and to the gladdened future bear
That witness which the present would not heed,
Bringing forth many a thought and deed,
And, planted safely in the eternal sky,
Bloom into stars which earth is guided by.

VIII.

Full of deep love thou art, yet not more full
Than all thy common brethren of the ground,
Wherein, were we not dull,
Some words of highest wisdom might be found;
Yet earnest faith from day to day may cull
Some syllables, which, rightly joined, can make
A spell to soothe life's bitterest ache,
And ope Heaven's portals, which are near us still,
Yea, nearer ever than the gates of Ill,

IX.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of Heaven, and could some wondrous secret show
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

X.

But let me read thy lesson right or no,
Of one good gift from thee my heart is sure;
Old I shall never grow
While thou each year dost come to keep me pure
With legends of my childhood; ah, we owe
Well more than half life's holiness to these
Nature's first lowly influences,
At thought of which the heart's glad doors burst ope,
In dreariest days, to welcome peace and hope.

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## THE BOBOLINK.

Anacreon of the meadow,
Drunk with the joy of Spring!
Beneath the tall pine's voiceful shadow
I lie and drink thy jargoning;

My soul is full with melodies,
One drop would overflow it
And send the tears into mine eyes—
But what car'st thou to know it?
Thy heart is free as mountain air,
And of thy lays thou hast no care,
Scattering them gayly everywhere,
Happy, unconscious poet!

Upon a tuft of meadow grass,
While thy loved one tends the nest,
Thou swayest as the breezes pass,
Unburthening thine o'erfull breast
Of the crowded songs that fill it,
Just as joy may choose to will it.
Lord of thy love and liberty,
The blithest bird of merry May,
Thou turnest thy bright eyes on me,
That say as plain as eye can say:
"Here sit we, here in the summer weather,
I and my modest mate together;
Whatever your wise thoughts may be,
Under that gloomy old pine tree,
We do not value them a feather.

Now, leaving earth and me behind,
Thou beatest up against the wind,
Or, floating slowly down before it,
Above thy grass-hid nest thou flutterest
And thy bridal love-song utterest,
Raining showers of music o'er it,

Weary never, still thou trillest
Spring-gladsome lays,
As of moss-rimmed water-brooks
Murmuring through pebbly nooks
In quiet summer days.
My heart with happiness thou fillest;
I seem again to be a boy
Watching thee, gay, blithesome lover,
O'er the bending grass-tops hover,
Quivering thy wings for joy.
There's something in the apple-blossom,
The greening grass and bobolink's song,
That wakes again within my bosom
Feelings which have slumbered long.
As long, long years ago I wandered,
I seem to wander even yet,
The hours the idle schoolboy squandered,
The man would die ere he'd forget.
O hours that frosty eld deemed wasted,
Nodding his gray head toward my books,
I dearer prize the lore I tasted
With you, among the trees and brooks,
Than all that I have gained since then
From learnèd books or study-withered men!
Nature, thy soul was one with mine,
And, as a sister by a younger brother
Is loved, each flowing to the other,
Such love for me was thine.
Or wert thou not more like a loving mother
With sympathy and loving power to heal,
Against whose heart my throbbing heart I'd lay

Till calm and holiness would o'er me steal?
Was not the golden sunset a dear friend?
Found I no kindness in the silent moon,
And the green trees, whose tops did sway and bend,
Low singing evermore their pleasant tune?
Felt I no heart in dim and solemn woods,
No loved one's voice in lonely solitudes?
Yes! yes! unhoodwinked then my spirit's eyes,
Blind leaders had not *taught me* to be wise.

Dear hours! which now again I over-live,
Hearing and seeing with the ears and eyes
Of childhood, ye were bees, that to the hive
Of my young heart came laden with rich prize,
Gathered in fields and woods and sunny dells, to be
My spirit's food in days more wintery.
Yea, yet again ye come! ye come!
And, like a child once more at home
After long sojourning in alien climes,
I lie upon my mother's breast,
Feeling the blessedness of rest,
And dwelling in the light of other times.

O ye whose living is not *Life,*
Whose dying is but death,
Song, empty toil, and petty strife,
Rounded with loss of breath!
Go, look on Nature's countenance,
Drink in the blessing of her glance;
Look on the sunset, hear the wind,
The cataract, the awful thunder;

Go, worship by the sea;
Then, and then only, shall ye find,
With ever-growing wonder,
Man is not all in all to ye;
Go with a meek and humble soul,
Then shall the scales of self unroll
From off your eyes; the weary packs
Drop from your heavy-laden backs;
And ye shall see,
With reverent and hopeful eyes,
Glowing with new-born energies,
How great a thing it is to *be*.

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## THE PRESENT CRISIS.

I.

When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad
earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east
to west,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within
him climb
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sublime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem
of Time.

II.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots the instan-
taneous throe,
When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to
and fro;

At the birth of each new Era, with a recognizing start,
Nation wildly looks at nation, standing with mute lips apart,
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child leaps beneath the Future's heart.

III.

So the Evil's triumph sendeth, with a terror and a chill,
Under continent to continent, the sense of coming ill,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels his sympathies with God
In hot tear-drops ebbing earthward, to be drunk up by the sod,
Till a corpse crawls round unburied, delving in the nobler clod.

IV.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right or wrong;
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame;—
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim.

V.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,

In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or
evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each
the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon
the right,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness
and that light.

VI.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou
shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust
against our land?
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone
is strong,
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her
throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all
wrong.

VII.

Backward look across the ages and the beacon-mo-
ments see,
That, like peaks of some sunk continent, jut through
Oblivion's sea;
Not an ear in court or market for the low, foreboding
cry
Of those Crises, God's stern winnowers, from whose
feet earth's chaff must fly;
Never shows the choice momentous till the judgment
hath passed by.

VIII.

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

IX.

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is great,
Slow of faith, how weak an arm may turn the iron helm of fate,
But the soul is still oracular; amid the market's din,
List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave within,—
"They enslave their children's children who make compromise with sin."

X.

Slavery, the earth-born Cyclops, fellest of the giant brood,
Sons of brutish Force and Darkness, who have drenched the earth with blood,
Famished in his self-made desert, blinded by our purer day,
Gropes in yet unblasted regions for his miserable prey;—

Shall we guide his gory fingers where our helpless children play?

XI.

Then to side with Truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting, in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.

XII.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes,—they were souls that stood alone,
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone,
Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme design.

XIII.

By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back,

And these mounts of anguish number how each generation learned
One new word of that grand *Credo* which in prophet-hearts hath burned
Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned.

XIV.

For Humanity sweeps onward: where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

XV.

'Tis as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle slaves
Of a legendary virtue carved upon our fathers' graves,
Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light a crime;—
Was the Mayflower launched by cowards, steered by men behind their time?
Turn those tracks toward Past or Future, that make Plymouth Rock sublime?

XVI.

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,
Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the Past's;
But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that hath made us free,
Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while our tender spirits flee
The rude grasp of that great Impulse which drove them across the sea.

XVII.

They have rights who dare maintain them; we are traitors to our sires,
Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar fires;
Shall we make their creed our jailer? Shall we, in our haste to slay,
From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral lamps away
To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of to-day?

XVIII.

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,

Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.

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## THE FATHERLAND.

I.

Where is the true man's fatherland?
Is it where he by chance is born?
Doth not the yearning spirit scorn
In such scant borders to be spanned?
O yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

II.

Is it alone where freedom is,
Where God is God and man is man?
Doth he not claim a broader span
For the soul's love of home than this?
O yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

III.

Where'er a human heart doth wear
Joy's myrtle-wreath or sorrow's gyves,
Where'er a human spirit strives
After a life more true and fair,
There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!

IV.

Where'er a single slave doth pine,
Where'er one man may help another,—
Thank God for such a birthright, brother,—
That spot of earth is thine and mine!
There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland.

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## A SONG.

I.

Violet! sweet violet!
Thine eyes are full of tears!
Are they wet
Even yet
With the thought of other years?
Or with gladness are they full,
For the night so beautiful,
And longing for those far-off spheres?

II.

Loved one of my youth thou wast,
Of my merry youth,
And I see,
Tearfully,
All the fair and sunny past,
All its openness and truth,
Ever fresh and green in thee
As the moss is in the sea.

III.

Thy little heart, that hath with love
Grown colored like the sky above,
On which thou lookest ever,—
Can it know
All the woe
Of hope for what returneth never,
All the sorrow and the longing
To these hearts of ours belonging?

IV.

Out on it! no foolish pining
For the sky
Dims thine eye,
Or for the stars so calmly shining;
Like thee let this soul of mine
Take hue from that wherefor I long,
Self-stayed and high, serene and strong,
Not satisfied with hoping—but divine.

V.

Violet! dear violet!
Thy blue eyes are only wet
With joy and love of Him who sent thee,
And for the fulfilling sense
Of that glad obedience
Which made thee all that Nature meant thee!

## WITH A PRESSED FLOWER.

This little flower from afar
Hath come from other lands to thine;
For, once, its white and drooping star
Could see its shadow in the Rhine.

Perchance some fair-haired German maid
Hath plucked one from the self-same stalk,
And numbered over, half afraid,
Its petals in her evening walk.

"He loves me, loves me not," she cries;
"He loves me more than earth or Heaven,"
And then glad tears have filled her eyes
To find the number was uneven.

So, Love, my heart doth wander forth
To farthest lands beyond the sea,
And search the fairest spots of earth
To find sweet flowers of thought for thee.

A type this tiny blossom is
Of what my heart doth every day,
Seeking for pleasant fantasies
To brood upon when thou 'rt away.

And thou must count its petals well,
Because it is a gift from me;
And the last one of all shall tell
Something I've often told to thee.

But here at home, where we were born,
Thou wilt find flowers just as true,
Down bending every summer morn
With freshness of New England dew.

For Nature, ever right in love,
Hath given them the same sweet tongue,
Whether with German skies above,
Or here our granite rocks among.

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## MY LOVE.

I.

Not as all other women are
Is she that to my soul is dear;
Her glorious fancies come from far
Beneath the silver evening-star,
And yet her heart is ever near.

II.

Great feelings hath she of her own
Which lesser souls may never know;
God giveth them to her alone,
And sweet they are as any tone
Wherewith the wind may choose to blow.

III.

Yet in herself she dwelleth not,
Although no home were half so fair
No simplest duty is forgot,
Life hath no dim and lowly spot
That doth not in her sunshine share.

IV.

She doeth little kindnesses,
Which most leave undone, or despise,
For naught that sets one heart at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
Is low-esteemèd in her eyes.

She hath no scorn of common things,
And, though she seem of other birth,
Round us her heart entwines and clings,
And patiently she folds her wings
To tread the humble paths of earth.

Blessing she is: God made her so,
And deeds of weekday holiness
Fall from her noiseless as the snow,
Nor hath she ever chanced to know
That aught were easier than to bless.

She is most fair, and thereunto
Her life doth rightly harmonize;
Feeling or thought that was not true
Ne'er made less beautiful the blue
Unclouded heaven of her eyes.

She is a woman: one in whom
The springtime of her childish years
Hath never lost its fresh perfume,
Though knowing well that life hath room
For many blights and many tears.

I love her with a love as still
As a broad river's peaceful might,
Which, by high tower and lowly mill,
Goes wandering at its own will,
And yet doth ever flow aright.

And, on its full, deep breast serene,
Like quiet isles my duties lie;
It flows around them and between,
And makes them fresh and fair and green,
Sweet homes wherein to live and die.

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## THE CHANGELING.

I HAD a little daughter,
And she was given to me
To lead me gently backward
To the Heavenly Father's knee,
That I, by the force of nature,
Might in some dim wise divine
The depth of His infinite patience
To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,
But to me she was wholly fair,
And the light of the heaven she came from
Still lingered and gleamed in her hair;
For it was as wavy and golden,
And as many changes took,
As the shadows of sun-gilt ripples
On the yellow bed of a brook.

To what can I liken her smiling
Upon me, her kneeling lover,
How it leaped from her lips to her eyelids
And dimpled her wholly over,
Till her outstretched hands smiled also,
And I almost seemed to see
The very heart of her mother
Sending sun through her veins to me!

She had been with us scarce a twelvemonth,
And it hardly seemed a day,
When a troop of wandering angels
Stole my darling daughter away;
Or perhaps those heavenly Zingari
But loosed the hampering strings,
And when they had opened the cage-door,
My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling,
A little angel child,
That seems like her bud in full blossom,
And smiles as she never smiled;
When I wake in the morning I see it
Where she always used to lie,
And I feel as weak as a violet
Alone 'neath the awful sky.

As weak, yet as trustful also;
For the whole year long I see
All the wonders of faithful Nature
Still worked for the love of me;

Winds wander and dews drip earthward,
  Rains fall, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
  A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,
  I cannot sing it to rest,
I cannot lift it up fatherly
  And bliss it upon my breast;
Yet it lies in my little one's cradle,
  And it sits in my little one's chair,
And the light of the heaven she's gone to
  Transfigures its golden hair.

# NOTES

## THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL.

This poem came from the author's pen, substantially as it now stands, almost at a single sitting, within the space of forty-eight hours. During this time the poet scarcely ate or slept.

"It was almost an improvisation, and its effect upon the reader is like that of the outburst of an inspired singer. The effect upon the public was immediate and powerful; the poem needed no herald or interpreter."—Underwood.

"As often as the first eight lines of this poem come to mind, I feel a poetic breath not borne to me again from our home hills and fields, and rarely wafted from the old lands beyond the sea; and passing on to the thirty-third line, beginning,

'And what is so rare as a day in June?'

I say each time, 'Here and in certain passages of the later odes are the purest, the sweetest, and at the same time the freshest strains from any singer of our soil."—John Vance Cheney.

Line 1. *Musing.* Consider the particular force of the word.

2. *Doubtfully and far away.* Amplify.

3. *List.* What word would have been used in prose?

4. *And builds, etc.* Can you trace a similar thought in Browning's *Abt Vogler?*

"Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch . . .
Should rush into sight at once. . . ."

5. *Touch.* Suggest synonyms for the word as used here.

7. Give in full the comparison suggested by the metaphor here.

8. How may the *vista* of the organist's dream be termed *wavering?*

9-10. A reference to the well-known lines of Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality:*

> "Heaven lies about us in our infancy;
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy."

Compare also Hood's lines:

> "I remember, I remember,
> The fir-trees dark and high;
> I used to think their slender tops
> Were close against the sky.
>
> "It was a childish ignorance,
> But now 'tis little joy
> To know I'm farther off from heaven
> Than when I was a boy."

12. *We Sinais climb.* It was on Mount Sinai, in the northwestern part of Arabia, that Moses talked with God and received the Ten Commandments. See Ex. xix, 20.

13. Compare again Browning's *Abt Vogler:*

> "And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth."

15. Do the *great winds* prophesy against us by giving us intimations of God, of whom we have been unmindful in allowing our lives to become *fallen and traitor,* by suggesting to us their obedience to law, as compared with our disregard of it; or is there still another explanation?

16. Does this simply mean that mountains are inspiring?

Are not the inhabitants of mountainous countries usually brave and liberty-loving? With the line compare *Childe Harold:*

"And to me
High mountains are a feeling."

And Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey:*

"The mountains . . . were then to me
An appetite, a feeling, and a love."

17. *Druid wood.* The Druids were the priests, or prophets, of the ancient Celts who lived in the woods, performing there all religious observances, and giving instruction to the people. The figure of the Druid wood has been a favorite with the poets. Cf. *Evangeline:*

"The murmuring pines and the hemlocks. . . .
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic."

Why does the Druid wood utter the benedicite, rather than the wind or sea?

19. *Age's.* Connect in thought with lines 9 and 13.

21. *Earth gets its price.* Observe the contrast with what follows:

"'Tis heaven alone that is given away."

22. *Beggar.* What is the meaning of the word here? Explain the thought of the line.

25. What is the important word in this line?

27. By what figure is a *fool's reward* indicated?

28. What are some of the *bubbles we buy?*

29. What is the meaning of *heaven* as used here?

33. June was the favorite month of Lowell, as May has always been of the English poets. In *Under the Willows,* he says:

"June is the pearl of our New England year;
. . . . . .
May is a pious fraud of the almanac,
A ghastly parody of real spring."

"I think also that *The Vision of Sir Launfal* owed its success quite as much to presentation of nature as to its misty legend. It really is a landscape poem, of which the lovely passage, 'And what is so rare as a day in June?' and the wintry prelude to Part Second are the specific features."—Stedman.

35-36. *Heaven . . . lays.* Give in full the comparison implied in this metaphor. Compare with the feeling expressed in "his loved instrument" of line 5.

38. What are some of the things in which life murmurs and glistens?

41-42. Explain in full the meaning of these lines.

43. *Flash.* Can you suggest another word that will express as much in this connection?

46. *The buttercup . . . chalice.* Is there a special fitness in speaking of the chalice of the buttercup as catching the sun? What is the figure?

50. What special form does *stilt* give to the picture?

51. Read this line, emphasizing in turn *lets, illumined being,* and *o'errun.*

54. Why *dumb* breast?

55. Swinton asks what human application can be made of this line.

56. Suggest synonyms of *nice.* Can you answer the question?

"What Lowell loves most in nature are the trees and their winged inhabitants, and the flowers that grow unattended. The singing of birds, as we learn in both his prose and verse, enraptured him."—Stedman.

Compare the following lines from the *Indian-Summer Reverie:*

> "Meanwhile that devil-may-care, the bobolink,
> Remembering duty, in mid-quaver stops
> Just ere he sweeps o'er rapture's tremulous brink,
> And 'twixt the windrows most demurely drops."

59. *Flooding back.* Compare the *thrilling back* of line 44.

What is the basis of this metaphor? How many lines does it cover?

62. One of the most noticeable characteristics of Lowell's poetry is its deep religious feeling. Compare *The Courtin'*.

> "God made sech nights, all white an' still
> Fur'z you can look or listen."

and

> "So nigh to the . . . heart of God,
> You almost seem to feel it beat
> Down from the sunshine and up from the sod."

67. Does line 65 contain the key to this line?

70. Lowell's fondness for the dandelion may be seen in his poem *To the Dandelion.*

77. Is there anything in this line that tends to destroy its euphony?

87. *Unscarred . . . wake.* Is the figure mixed?

91. *Sulphurous rifts.* This figure anticipates what lines?

94-95. Has the poet been letting his "fingers wander as they list" thus far?

96. *et seq.* Compare with this passage the preparations made by Sir Galahad and Percevale's sister in Tennyson's *Holy Grail:*

> "And so she prayed and fasted till the sun
> Shone . . .
> But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
> Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
> Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
> And out of this she plaited broad and long
> A strong sword belt, and wove with silver thread
> And crimson in the belt a strange device,
> A crimson grail within a silver beam;
> And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him."

99. *Holy Grail.* See Introduction.

102. Compare Sir Launfal's vow with the vow of Gawain and the other knights of the Round Table. See Introduction.

103. *On the rushes.* It was a custom of feudal times to have the floors strewn with rushes.

110. What time of the year does this line indicate it to be?

109-118. Does the contrast contained in these lines suggest the class distinctions of the feudal period?

119. *Summer besieged.* Does this metaphor continue the thought of the simile in line 115?

122. What are the *pavilions tall* of this line and the *tents* of line 125?

128. How does the change in the rhythm affect the vividness of this stanza?

137. Does this line seem incongruous with what precedes?

144. How appropriate is *gloomed* here and *brimmed* in the following line?

146. *Pitcher-plant's cup.* Is this figure dignified enough to correspond with the rest of the stanza?

147. *Made morn.* Explain.

148. Do you find a commonplace, prosaic expression in this line which detracts from the beauty of the stanza?

154. What do you think of the force and beauty of this simile?

159. Who are included in the term *leper?*

163. *True.* Explain.

166. *He.* Give grammatical construction.

168. What is this *thread of the all-sustaining Beauty?* How does it run through and unite all? Give the meaning of the passage in full.

172. *A god.* That is, a power to bless. What part of speech is *store?*

175. *Five thousand.* Is there any special reason for *five* rather than for any other number? What is the figure of speech?

176. Is *open* necessary to define what is meant by *wold?* Consult dictionary.

180. In his essay, *A Good Word for Winter,* Lowell shows his love for the "season of cold." "For my part," he says, "I think winter a pretty wide-awake old boy, and his bluff

sincerity and hearty ways are more congenial to my mood, and more wholesome for me, than any charms of which his rivals are capable." Compare likewise the beautiful description of winter in *An Indian-Summer Reverie.*

181. Lowell himself tells us the source of this picture of the brook. "Last night I walked to Watertown over the snow," he writes in a letter, "with the new moon before me, and a sky exactly like that in Page's evening landscape. Orion was rising behind me; and, as I stood on the hill just before you enter the village, the stillness of the fields around me was delicious, broken only by the tinkle of a little brook which runs too swiftly for Frost to catch it. My picture of the brook in *Sir Launfal* was drawn from it."

184. Explain *groined.* Compare Emerson's use of the word in *The Problem:*

"And groined the aisles of Christian Rome."

195. Explain *relief* and *arabesques* in the following line.

201. How were the beams *crystalled?*

210. How does the thought of this line agree with that of line 181?

212. *Cheeks of Christmas.* What is the figure? Express the thought literally.

213. *Corbel.* This is a shoulder-piece jutting out in the wall, or a bracket supporting the spring of an arch. It is much used in Gothic architecture.

216. What do you think of the use of *wallows* here? The burning of the *Yule-log* in the fireplace on Christmas Eve is an old custom come down to us from heathen times. The word comes from *jul,* the Swedish and Danish word for Christmas.

220. *Galleries blind.* Explain the figure.

223. What is meant by the *soot-forest's tangled dark?*

224. Is the picture of dreariness in lines 174-180 intensified by this stanza? If so, how?

233. The *seneschal* was an officer in the households of mediæval nobles and dignitaries, whose duty it was to superintend

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all domestic ceremonies. What do you think of the figure, *flared like a torch,* as a predicate of voice?

238-239. Explain the metaphor in these lines.

240. For vividness compare this stanza with stanza III of Part First. What produces this vividness?

243. Contrast with the metaphor in this line the one in line 181. State the effect of each.

244. What does the *single crow* add to the scene? Compare line 109.

249. What is the difference in effect of the two pictures of morning, as given in this stanza and stanza IV of Part First?

250. Explain the figure in *hard gate.*

259. Comment on the force of *barbéd* as used here.

270. Name two things that add much to the beauty of this line.

279. What is it that produces the strength of this line?

287. How long had it taken Sir Launfal to arrive at this conception of Christ and of mankind? Cf. Matt. xxv, 40: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

294. *Ashes and dust.* Explain. Compare with the expression, "Repent in sackcloth and ashes."

307. *Beautiful Gate.* A reference, doubtless, to Acts iii, 2, where mention is made of the Gate Beautiful of the Temple.

309. Compare 1 Cor. ii, 16: "Ye are the temples of God."

318. *Behold it is here.* What is the practical application of the fact that Sir Launfal found the Holy Grail at his own door?

327. *Himself.* How is the giver fed by his own gift? Compare Acts xx, 35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The beauty of these lines, as indeed that of many others, must be absorbed and felt; it cannot be imparted. The lesson taught here is one that the poet often urges. The same idea of human love and sympathy is paramount in *A Parable.*

322. What is the *stronger mail* referred to here?

336. *The hangbird.* The oriole. In *My Garden Acquaint-*

*ance* Lowell also makes mention of the oriole's nest in the elm tree.

## QUESTIONS.

### Prelude to Part First.

1. What is the purpose of the first stanza?
2. What is the name of the analogy that the poet suggests by his figure?
3. Just what about the poem does the stanza tell?
4. What is the theme of the poet?
5. Explain the thoughts that the poet puts into "faint auroral flushes."

### Lines 9-20.

6. To whose ascent of Mount Sinai is reference made?
7. Explain the purpose for which he went up into the mountain.
8. Explain how we ascend Sinai without knowing it.
9. What particulars are given in substantiation of the general statement?
10. What, then, is the central idea of these twelve lines?
11. What appeals are made to us?
12. Through what channels are they made?
13. Explain in what way our lives may be said to be "fallen and traitor."
14. Explain what there is of benediction in the wood; of inspiration in the sea.

### Lines 21-32.

15. Explain the nature of the contrast in this section of the poem.
16. Express the central idea of this stanza in terms of this contrast.
17. What relation do lines 22-28 bear to the general statement with which the stanza opens.
18. What other general statement is made in the stanza? Illustrated by what particulars?

19. In what way does this stanza prepare for the passage that follows?

LINES 33-56.

20. What part of this stanza is given to the description of the beauty of a day in June?

21. What part is devoted to showing the fullness of life in nature?

22. Which lines show the influence of spring on living things?

23. Which of the above ideas contains most nearly the central thought of the stanza? Explain how.

LINES 57-79.

24. In what is the thought of this stanza closely connected with that of the preceding?

25. In what way does it progress nearer to the poet's theme?

26. What general statement is made and then substantiated by particulars?

27. Is the poet's purpose here to show the influence of the return of life upon earth's creatures in general, more particularly upon man?

LINES 80-95.

28. In what way does the thought of this stanza differ from that of the preceding?

29. In what way is this stanza a summary of the preceding parts of the prelude?

30. In what way is it the culmination of a line of thought?

31. Show how the author is nearer his theme than he has been before.

## PART FIRST.

### I.

32. What elements of Sir Launfal's character are suggested by this first stanza?

33. By what means is his character unfolded to us?

34. What is Sir Launfal's evident purpose in setting out on the quest?

35. What is the spirit that prompts the knight to sleep on the rushes?

II.

36. What is the time of year suggested by the first two lines?

37. What purpose has the author in portraying to us the castle instead of the knight? What is the effect?

39. Show how the castle illustrates Sir Launfal's attitude toward humanity.

39. Mention the human qualities suggested by the castle.

III.

40. In what way does the first line of this stanza suggest Sir Launfal's lack of consecration to his mission?

41. Why does the poet lay so much stress on the gilded mail?

42. What condition of mind is suggested by "lightsome as a locust leaf"?

43. What does the last line of the stanza suggest about the young knight?

IV.

44. Can you see that this stanza adds anything to the contrast in Stanza II?

45. For what purpose is the contrast introduced here, between Sir Launfal just before and just after he sees the leper?

V.

46. In what way did Sir Launfal make morn?

47. What purpose has Lowell in emphasizing the loathsomeness of the leper?

48. Compare these lines with lines 136-139 and explain just why Sir Launfal felt as he did.

49. Just why did Sir Launfal scorn the leper?

### VI.

50. Which is more forcible—the statement of the leper's rejection of the gift, or the explanation of his reason for rejecting it? Explain why.

51. How does this incident affect our opinion of Sir Launfal's quest?

52. Explain why Lowell proceeds no further with Sir Launfal's quest.

## PRELUDE TO PART SECOND.

### Lines 174-210.

53. What is the effect of this abrupt introduction of the bleakness of winter?

54. What does it suggest with respect to Sir Launfal's need? His quest?

55. Explain the reason for the author's choice of this winter scene for this prelude.

56. Explain the significance of the brightness and life of the brook under its covering of ice.

### Lines 174-180.

57. With what is this cheerfulness of the brook contrasted?

58. In what way does the brook, in the midst of its dismal winter, form a direct contrast with Sir Launfal in Part First?

59. In what way may the brook be compared to Sir Launfal on his return?

60. Explain the general nature of the figure running through this passage.

### Lines 211-224.

61. Explain why this picture of the interior of the castle is given here.

62. With what other passages of the poem does it form a contrast?

63. In what way is the cheerfulness of this picture different from that of the brook?

64. Do you find anything selfish in this one?

65. For what does this picture prepare? In what way?

LINES 225-239.

66. With what is the first line contrasted?

67. In what way has the author prepared us for this introduction of Sir Launfal as an old man?

68. Explain the appropriateness of the introduction of Christmas here.

69. In what respect may the deed of the seneschal be compared to Sir Launfal's treatment of the leper in Part First?

70. Explain the general meaning of this prelude, and its relation to the rest of the poem.

## PART SECOND.

### I.

71. What characteristic of winter does Lowell emphasize in this stanza?

72. With what in Part First is this in contrast?

73. Point out the various elements of contrast.

### II.

74. What lesson has Sir Launfal learned when he turns from his own hard gate?

75. What inner change is suggested by his no longer wearing the cross on his surcoat?

### III.

77. Under what circumstances, pleasurable or otherwise, has Sir Launfal seen the things mentioned here?

78. Explain whether or not his reverie is pleasurable.

IV.

79. Compare the suddenness of the leper's appearance here with that in Part First.

80. What is the first thing about the leper to be noticed by Sir Launfal both times they meet?

V.

81. What feeling is aroused at the first meeting? At the second?

82. Just what has wrought the difference in Sir Launfal—failure or suffering?

VI.

83. What is it that reminds Sir Launfal of his former meeting with the leper?

84. What is the spirit in which Sir Launfal gives to the leper now?

VII.

85. About what was Sir Launfal musing?

86. What is the evident significance of this transformation of the leper?

VIII.

87. What ideas in the first prelude has Sir Launfal's life in his vision exemplified?

88. What, in Sir Launfal's second gift, is most strongly exemplified?

89. In what way is Sir Launfal rewarded for his gift?

IX.

90. How much time has elapsed since the dream began?

91. Can you see any reason for Lowell's having Sir Launfal learn the lesson through the vision, instead of by actual experience?

92. Is the actual Sir Launfal seen in this stanza and the first stanza of Part First as haughty and selfish as the Sir Launfal of the first part of the vision?

## X.

93. If the poem ended with the first line of this stanza, how much would be told about the change in Sir Launfal's life?

94. Why does this suggest so much?

95. Explain, as fully as you can, how the castle illustrates Sir Launfal's attitude toward humanity.

96. For what does *summer* stand in this stanza?

97. Aside from Sir Launfal's kindness, what adds pleasure to this closing stanza?

98. In what way has Sir Launfal climbed Sinai without knowing it?

99. Compare the way Sir Launfal profited by the lesson he learned in his vision with the use the Ancient Mariner made of his awful experiences at sea.

100. Explain fully the life lesson the author meant to teach by the poem.

## RHŒCUS.

56. *Dryad.* The active imagination of the ancients peopled with superior beings every mountain, vale, plain, stream, and tree. These beings were called *nymphs.* The nymphs were beings of natures somewhere between the natures of men and those of gods. They were gifted with power to make themselves visible or invisible at will; were "able to do many things only permitted to be done by gods; living, like the gods, on ambrosia; leading a cheerful, happy life of long duration, and retaining strength and youthfulness to the last, but not destined to immortality."

*Dryad* was the name given to nymphs who inhabited forests, trees, and shrubs.

## QUESTIONS.

1. What is the central thought of this poem?

2. State, in a single sentence, the thought of the first stanza of the poem.

3. What idea is developed in the first thirty-five lines?

4. What was the feeling that prompted Rhœcus to prop up the old oak?

5. What is the real thought behind the Greek's belief that trees were inhabited by Dryads?

6. What is the weakness in the character of Rhœcus that causes his disappointment?

7. What feeling led Rhœcus to forget his appointment?

8. Why did he treat the bee so roughly, although he felt sympathy for the old oak?

9. Just why is Rhœcus unable to see the Dryad?

10. What is the effect of his error upon his life?

## A CHIPPEWA LEGEND.

"For the leading incidents in this tale I am indebted to the very valuable *Algic Researches* of Henry R. Schoolcraft, Esq." —Lowell.

12. Justify this assertion.

13-17. Is this idea common among Indians, or is it the Christian conception of the poet put into the mouth of the old chief?

19. Note the simplicity of this legend as compared with that of Prometheus. To what cause do you attribute it?

22. *Moons.* What is the special propriety in the use of this figure here?

24-30. What is the keynote of the character of the elder brother as exhibited in these lines? Was it this that led him to forget utterly the little Sheemah (line 36)?

40. Is the sister true to her brother from love or duty?

55. Is the sister led away at last by pride or selfishness, or both?

76. *From hope to fear.* What was his hope? His fear?

91. Reference is made to Ruth, who was befriended by Boaz. See Ruth ii.

102. *Was something.* What was it?

110. *Even.* A common use of the word in the Bible.

113. Why can he not meet Sheemah's *first look?*

114. What is the spirit in which the elder brother speaks to Sheemah?

123. *Till the heart be changed.* Was not the heart of the elder brother already changed? What then is meant?

130. Was this really Sheemah or an illusion caused by the elder brother's guilty conscience?

What is the meaning of this poem?

## AMBROSE.

2. *Ambrose.* One of the early church fathers, noted for his zeal and piety.

6. The early church fathers believed that sin was to be avoided by giving as little attention as possible to the body; in other words, by "crucifying the flesh."

36. *Porch.* Express your opinion of this metaphor.

42. *Pillar of fire and cloud.* A reference to the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, which went before the Israelites in their journey out of Egypt. See Exodus xii, 21, 22.

46. *Dividual essence.* Explain.

58. *Put on the figure.* Explain.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. What are the qualities of Ambrose's character as shown in the poem?

2. Why was the creed of Ambrose a failure?

3. What relation in thought do stanzas IX and X bear to stanza VII?

4. What, then, in your opinion, is the purpose of the poem?

5. What information do you get regarding the religious belief of Lowell?

## A PARABLE.

2. *Holy hill.* The holy hill of Scripture was Mount Zion. Is the prophet represented as having made a pilgrimage to this place?

12. What kind of a sign did the prophet desire?

20. What hint does this stanza give concerning Lowell's idea of God as revealed in nature?

26. *In Eld.* Of old, in olden times.

28. Explain the meaning in this line. Does the following stanza throw light on it?

36. How was he *less than they?*

44. Compare with this a thought in *Sir Launfal:*

"The Grail in my castle here is found."

## AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE.

"What Lowell loves most are the trees and their winged inhabitants, and the flowers that grow unattended. The *Indian-Summer Reverie* is an early and delightful avowal of his pastoral tastes. His favorite birds and trees, the meadows, river, and marshes, all are there, put in with strokes no modern descriptive poet has excelled."—Stedman.

Line 1. *Visionary.* Note the force of this word as suggesting that which is dim, distant, faintly seen, and at the same time that which is fighting or changeable.

5. *Hebe* was the cup-bearer of the gods. Note how the figure is carried out in *fills the bowl.*

7. *Tremulous hair.* Explain what is meant.

11. *Projected.* Spread out, extended, expanded. Note what the word means by derivation.

22. *Chickadee.* The black-cap titmouse of North America.

25. *Gleaning Ruth.* For Ruth gleaning in the fields of Boaz, refer to Ruth ii.

28. *Seem remote.* Do distances seem greater in the autumn than during other seasons of the year in certain localities? Give reason for your answer.

29. *The cock's shrill trump.* Compare "the cock's shrill clarion" of Gray's *Elegy.*

33. *Flails.* Much of the threshing on the smaller farms of New England was done with a flail at a comparatively recent date; and the instrument may still occasionally be seen.

38. *Shag-bark's.* The shag-bark is a species of hickory.

46. *Single crow.* The crow seems to be a favorite bird of Lowell. Cf. *Sir Launfal,* 109, and 244:

"A single crow on the tree-top bleak."

See also line 166 of this poem.

50. *Most shy and ladylike of trees.* Explain why these epithets are applicable to the birch.

59. *Lapt.* Enveloped, wrapt.

61. Note the contrast between *hushed wood* and *city's flare.*

67. How does the red-oak appear to *rebuff the kiss of the relenting sky?*

83. Express your opinion of *ensanguined,* as applied to the color of autumnal leaves. Also of *coral,* in the following line.

85. *Crumbling boundary.* What is it?

92. *The Charles* separates Cambridge from Boston. Explain *a stripe of nether sky.*

94. *Bellying by.* For the use of this word, cf. *Sir Launfal,* 218:

"And belly and tug as a flag in the wind."

99. *Marshes.* Here used in the sense of *flats.*

106. *They.* What is the antecedent?

107. *Glimmering.* Show the application of this figure.

119. Note the numerous figures in this stanza. Give the application of each. *Of dimpling light* modifies what?

120. *Blithesome* is a very common word with Lowell. Do any synonyms express as much?

143. Explain the meaning of *shorn sun* and *swells.*

147. *Of . . . hill.* What does this phrase modify?

161. With the thought here compare the following from *Locksley Hall:*

"Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the parliament of man, the federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law."

163. *Tinkle.* For a like use of this word, see *Sir Launfal,* 189:

"Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt."

165. See note on 46.

172. *Too fleet and vanishing.* What is the length of winter as compared with the other seasons?

178. *Dumb and blind.* Compare *Sir Launfal, 242:*

"The river was dumb and could not speak."

183. *Eastern blow.* The storms of the vernal equinox.

190. *Druid-like.* Note the frequency with which this figure appears in Lowell.

192. *Stonehenge* is the name given to the Druidical monuments in Salisbury Plain, England. It is a set of circles and oval figures. The first circle has pillars of stone about 13 feet high and 4 feet apart, with stones placed across the top. There are about 140 stones in all, some being 23 feet high. Stonehenge has been classed as one of the four wonders of England.

201. *Nigh.* This word, used doubtless for the sake of rhyme, mars the beauty of the line much.

209. *Muses' factories.* The buildings of Harvard College.

220. *Cits.* A contraction of citizen. Do you think the word poetic?

221. *Coptic tombs.* The Copts were an ancient Egyptian race. Explain the force of the figure in this and the preceding lines.

222. *Allston.* Washington Allston was a native of America, but a member of the Royal Academy, England. After many years in Europe he returned to this country, where he devoted himself to literature and painting. He died in 1843.

227. *Undine-like.* Undine is the name of water-spirits in the mythology of the Paracelsists. The Undine could marry among mortals and received a soul upon the birth of a child. The idea has been beautifully developed in Fouqué's *Undine.*

230. *Painter.* See line 222 and note.

237. Compare with this stanza Longfellow's *Village Blacksmith.*

254. *Causey* is a shortened form of *causeway.*

255. *Paul Potter.* A painter of high renown, born at Enkhuysen in 1625. He was instructed in art by his father, Peter Potter. Before the attainment of his fifteenth year his work was held in high estimation. He was primarily a painter of animals, his landscapes rarely extending beyond a pasture, a clump of trees, and a farm-house or a hovel; but these are represented with uncommon fidelity.

264. *Collegisse juvat.* He is glad to have attended college.

280. With the feeling in this stanza compare the following lines from Wordsworth:

> "Dear native regions, I foretell,
> From what I feel at this farewell,
> That wheresoe'er my footsteps tend,
> And whensoe'er my course shall end,
> If in that hour a single tie
> Survive of local sympathy,
> My soul will cast the backward view,
> The longing look, alone on you."

## GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. Is there any one thought running through the poem? If so, what is it?

2. What was the author's purpose in writing this poem?

3. What things in nature does the poem show that he liked most?

4. What is the effect of nature on the poet's spirit?

5. Compare this poem with *Sir Launfal,* with regard to lyrical beauty.

## TO A DANDELION.

"Of Lowell's earlier pieces, the one which shows the finest sense of the poetry of Nature is that addressed 'To the Dandelion.' The opening phrase ranks with the selectest of Words-

worth and Keats, to whom imaginative diction came intuitively . . . and both thought and language are felicitous throughout. . . . This poem contains many of the author's peculiar beauties and none of his faults; it was the outcome of the mood that can summon a rare spirit of art to express the gladdest thought and most elusive feeling."—Stedman.

5. *Buccaneers.* Explain the force and application of the figure.

6. *Eldorado.* From the Spanish word *el,* the, and *dorado,* gilt or gilded. The word generally means to us *a land of gold.* Explain the figure.

14-15. Compare lines 31-32 of *Sir Launfal:*

> "No price is set on the lavish summer;
> June may be had by the poorest comer."

23. *Golden cuirassed.* What was the cuirass? Explain the force of the figure.

26. Sybaris was a town in Lucania, between the Sybaris and the Crathis rivers. The town was so noted for its luxury and love of pleasure that its name became a synonym of voluptuousness.

55. *The winds take care.* How?

57. *Fare.* The original meaning of this word was to *travel, journey;* the noun meaning a journey. Compare our *farewell.* It afterward came to mean the cost of traveling; hence its present meaning. The poets have used the word much in the original sense. Cf. Milton:

> "So on he fares, and to the border comes
> Of Eden."—*Paradise Lost.*

## GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. Which is the more natural and free in movement, *To a Dandelion* or *Appledore?*

2. From a comparison of these two poems, does it seem to you that Lowell was more at home with inland nature than with the sea?

3. The term *flawless* has been applied to this poem; does it seem to you to be justifiable?

4. What are the distinctive characteristics of the poem?

5. What elements has it in common with *Sir Launfal?*

## THE BOBOLINK.

1. Anacreon was a Greek poet of the latter part of the sixth century B. C. He was born at Teos, in Ionia, but spent the greater part of his life at the court of Polycrates, on the island of Samos, where he celebrated the praise of wine and dancing. He died in his eighty-sixth year, about 478 B. C.

6. Compare *Sir Launfal:*

> "The heart is so full that a drop overfills it."

13-15. With these lines compare the picture in *Sir Launfal,*

> "The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
> Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
> And lets his illumined being o'errun."

Which is more beautiful? Why?

16-17. This is worthy to be compared with the beautiful lines of Shelley's *To a Skylark:*

> "Bird thou never wert,
> That from heaven, or near it,
> Pourest thy full heart
> In profuse strains of unpremeditated art."

28. In the lines which follow, note how the metre varies to agree with the lightsomeness of the thought.

57. This same thought is expressed by Wordsworth in several of his poems. Compare the following from *The Tables Turned:*

> "Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
> Come, hear the woodland linnet,
> How sweet his music! On my life,
> There's more of wisdom in it."

73. *Unhoodwinked.* Has this word any place in æsthetic poetry?

106. The thought throughout this poem is quite Wordsworthian, and it is one of the poems cited as a proof of the influence of the great nature poet upon the early productions of Lowell.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. Are the lyrical qualities of this poem superior or inferior to those of *To a Dandelion?* Give reasons for your answer.

2. Does animate or inanimate nature appeal to Lowell more forcibly?

3. Is this poem simply an expression of poetic feeling? Give reason for answer.

4. What are the principal elements of its beauty?

5. Does the poem compare favorably with Shelley's *To a Skylark?*

## THE PRESENT CRISIS.

This poem was written in 1845 when the question of the annexing of Texas was before the country. This annexation was opposed by the anti-slavery party, on the ground that it would enlarge the slave territory and strengthen the South. The poem well illustrates Lowell's patriotism, his hatred of oppression, and the zeal with which he espoused the cause of abolition.

3-5. Express, in your own words, the effect upon the slave of a deed done for freedom.

6-10. The thought here seems to be that the advance of truth comes as a result of upheavals and overturnings of systems and institutions, and that the effect of every such advance is universal—felt through every "hut and palace."

13-15. What was the effect of *Evil's triumph* upon the slave?

16-20. Which line expresses the central thought of this stanza? Illustrates the truth of it. Compare the poet's expression of the same thought in the homely language of *The Biglow Papers:*

"Laborin' man an' laborin' woman
Hev one glory an' one shame.
Ev'y thin' that's done inhuman
Injers all on 'em the same."

Also the following from the *Capture of the Fugitive Slave near Washington:*

"He's true to God who's true to man; wherever wrong is done
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race."

23-25. Why is *some great cause* called *God's new Messiah?* See Matt. xxv, 32-33:

"And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

"And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

27. Reference is here made to the instructions of Christ to the Disciples. On departing from any city which refused to receive them they were to shake the dust from their sandals as a testimony against it.

28. Compare Bryant's lines:

"Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among her worshipers."

29-30. What does the poet mean by saying Truth was a wandering outcast? Explain the prophecy in these lines.

31. *Beacon-moments.* What other two expressions in the stanza are synonymous?

35. *Shows.* Give synonyms of the word as used here.

37. The reference is to John i, 1:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

39-40. Explain these lines.

42. What is the grammatical construction of this line?

43-44. The famous oracle of Apollo was at Delphi, an old Greek town in Phocis. In the centre of the temple was a small opening in the ground, out of which arose an intoxicating vapor. The priestess, called the Pythia, having breathed this, sat down upon a tripod placed over the hole in the ground and then delivered the oracle. It was either given in verse or handed over to a poet employed for turning it into poetic form. The Delphic oracle was famous not only in Greece, but among neighboring nations as well.

46-50. The reference in this stanza is to Polyphemus, the great Cyclops, who was king of this fabulous race of giants. They had a single eye in the middle of the forehead. When Ulysses landed on the island of Sicily he entered the cave of Polyphemus with twelve companions, six of whom were devoured by the giant. Ulysses succeeded in making Polyphemus drunk, and, after boring out the giant's one eye with a burning stake, made his escape, leaving the blinded monster to grope about in the darkness.

51-52. Lowell has expressed the same thought elsewhere:

"They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

56. Name some of the heroes the poet probably had in mind.

57. *Golden-beam.* Explain.

58. *Mastered.* To what does this participle belong?

64. *Credo.* In Latin the Apostles' Creed begins with this word, meaning *I believe.*

68. *Far in front.* Explain.

74. Does the poet mean to charge any persons or party with being behind their time? If so, whom?

78. What is meant by the *truth* of the Puritans?

83. Compare the first half of this line with line 78. What is the unexpressed object of *to slay?*

86. Illustrate the thought of this line.

90. Compare the meaning of this line with that of line 86.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. What was the purpose of this poem?

2. What is the prominent characteristic of the style?

3. What passages seem to you most vigorous?

4. Compare the stanza used in this poem, as regards force and beauty, with that of Sir Launfal.

5. How great would you judge the influence of this poem to have been, as compared with that of *The Biglow Papers?*

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